

RANDOM RECORDS;

BY

GEORGE COLMAN, THE YOUNGER.

*Nec tamen ingratum est quodcunque oblivia nostri
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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER FIRST.

THE Hay-Market Theatre in the year 1780;—Authors, Actors, and Dramas, there,—too many to enumerate in the heads of a Chapter.—How Bensley became an Actor, how he rehearsed *Pierre*, how he was married by *accident*, and how he died rich.—John Bannister;—his superior talents both as an Actor and a Mimick;—my early and lasting friendship for him;—his *Budget*, and a trait of his liberality in our dealings. p. 1

CHAPTER SECOND.

All Doggerel, and the shortest in the book. “THE SUPPER OF THE GHOSTS,” and “THE MARVELLOUS PHYSICIANS.” 31

CHAPTER THIRD.

WYNNSTAY, and my Last Journey thither, with my father;—Showing how my Sire was wont to sing upon the road;—The late Sir Watkyn Williams Wynn’s private Theatricals, and the Amateur Actors there;—Wynnstay Play-Bills.—The Hay-Market

Theatre in the season 1781 ;—Various new performances, &c.—The abominable *Beggars' Opera* *Reversed*.—I am banish'd to Scotland, by paternal decree ;—my journey thither with my Father's Treasurer, Mr. Jewell ;—We reach Edinburgh ;—State of the Theatre there under Jackson ;—Foote's former management of it ; his disgust ; and his domestick splendour.—Sumptuous *tête à tête* Dinner, at Fortune's, in the Old Town of Edinburgh, and its effect upon the Hay-Market Treasurer.

We proceed Northward ;—particulars of our progress on the road ;—Jewell leaves me in the hands of Professor Rory Macleod, at Old Aberdeen ; and—I go to bed. 40

CHAPTER FOURTH.

Old Aberdeen,—the Town, and King's College ;—System of Education, and Character of the Scholars, in the College ;—Want of discipline there.—Two young Englishmen (Messrs. Earle and Perkins) my fellow-students ;—we join in a Mess ;—our apartments, servants, and Lucky Lowe's fillet of veal.—Inventory of my furniture.—The late Doctor Charles Burney's Greek learning ;—Rory Macleod's Economy, and Marriage ;—I am made *free* of New Aberdeen ;—English companions and self ;—our habits of living, and our habits of *scarlet*.—Failure in my attempt to get out of Scotland ;—Excursion to Lawrence Kirk, Library at the Inn, and the ALBUM there, wherein I deposit my Maiden Tribute to the Muse ;—Return to College ;—I write a Poem, and a Farce,—and, moreover, I read. 84

CHAPTER FIFTH.

“ Once a Captain and always a Captain ; ”—Story of JOHN LEE, his accomplishments, profligacy, and deplorable death ;—The Laird of Col, his pride of Title, and his generosity ;—Anecdote of the late Francis Earl of Guilford ;—I commence a journey to Edinburgh *on foot* ;—disguises of myself and servant as soldiers on leave of absence ;—my annoyances and fatigues on the road ;

—reach the Town of Montrose ;—Story of the *Fisherman's Widow* ;—escape a press-gang ;—Day's voyage on board a Collier, from Montrose to Kirkcaldy ;—Loiterings and apprehensions at Kinghorn ;—arrival at Leith, and hair-dressing in the kitchen of a Publick House ;—reach Edinburgh, sick of romantick adventures. 117

CHAPTER SIXTH.

Return to King's College, and begin to write a Threc-Act Comedy ;—my careless method of composition ; and rules *for myself*, in case I should ever write for the Stage again.—I lose my english companions, sell off my furniture, quit the College, and go to Montrose ;—Asthmatick Organist in the Diligence ;—Pleasant Lodgings, and Lively Quakers ;—a Revisit to the *Fisherman's Widow* ;—Return to *New* Aberdeen ;—Live in a house with a *Ghost* ; and an account of the Apparition. . . . 174

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

Order'd back to London, by my father ;—regrets on leaving Aberdeen ;—journey from Edinburgh, with a fat Yankee, and a Scotch Terrier ;—our perils in the Dilly, and depth of the Snow ;—Reach Soho Square ;—wretched state of my wardrobe.—General Election in the year 1784.—*Election of the Managers*, written by my father ;—My Comedy of *Two to One*, and my father's excellent Prologue to it, produced in the Hay-Market Theatre.—My absurdities, on my success ;—congratulated by my afterwards very dear friend Francis North, late Earl of Guilford.—Trip to Paris, with an old Naval Officer ;—slight observations on a very few points during my stay in the French Metropolis ;—Pleasant sojournment at Bethune ;—French Officers there ;—*Regiment de Blaisois*, and the *Cuirassiers* ;—Return to Town ;—Fix in Chambers, in the Temple ;—Luck in finding Jekyll as my neighbour ;—his good jokes, and his good criticisms. . . . 208

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

Danger of haste in the choice of a Profession.—My extreme vanity, on the success of my *first* Play, and the check it received, on the production of my *fourth* ;—The late Lord Erskine's Book call'd *ARMATA* ;—his letters to me ; and *my* Opinions of *his* Opinions, on theatrical subjects ;—Turbulence of a Play-house Audience ;—Education of Actors. 242

CHAPTER NINTH.

I begin my Second Play, call'd *Turk and no Turk* ;—interrupted by Doctor Johnson's Funeral Procession ;—" *Turk and no Turk* " succeeds much better than so had a Play deserves ;—My father taken suddenly and alarmingly ill, at Margate ; my journey to him thither ;—account of the nature of his disorder ;—his partial convalescence ;—his Physician, Doctor Harvey, and Harvey the Innkeeper, at Bedfont ;—Mr. Silver, the Apothecary ;—Mr. Bearcroft, and the *Chicken* ;—Mr. George Keate, and his *eyebrows* ;—how a Mix'd Drama should be designated ;—my Father's return to Town,—and the End of the Second Volume. 271



RANDOM RECORDS.

CHAPTER FIRST.

"The Stagers and the Stage-Wrights too."

BEN JONSON.

I now return to a notice of those Dramas which were produced, at the Hay-Market Theatre, in the year 1780.

"The MANAGER IN DISTRESS," an occasional Prelude, written by my father, was very favourably received, and had a *run*. The occasional distress in the Piece is supposed to arise from a detention of most of the Summer Manager's *corps dramatique* at the Winter Theatres : an apology is formally made for their absence ; when certain individuals among the audience (that is, Actors personating Auditors) start up, successively

from their seats, in the Pit and Boxes, and propose various means of furnishing nightly entertainments, to be given by the Manager, without the assistance of Performers.

There is so much intrinsick pleasantry in this Occasional Prelude ;—the folly which then raged of Debating Societies (both male and *female* !) is so cleverly ridiculed ;—Mrs. Webb haranguing as a Lady of the *Belle Assemblée** ;—the younger Bannister giving his admirable Imitations ;— all these were enough, in themselves, to establish the Manager in Distress as a favourite :—But, besides these, the unusual effect created by Performers speaking from the different parts of the house in which they were dispersed, was an attraction.

This device of driving Characters in a Drama beyond the boundaries of the Stage, and transporting the Actors of them over the Orchestra, led the way to sundry practices of the same kind, which have, in latter days, been successful :—it was, however, only an old trick new revived ;—we may trace it up to “ The Knight of the Burning Pestle,” by Beaumont and Fletcher ; where the Grocer enters, to interrupt the Prologue ; and

* The *Belle Assemblée* met, to the best of my recollection, at the famed Mrs. Cornelly's, in Soho Square.

then calls up his Wife, and Apprentice, from the Pit; who both talk there, before they get upon the Boards:—And this, again, might have been suggested by Ben Jonson, who was fond of making Performers personate a part of the Audience, by bringing them upon the Stage to criticize a new Play during its progress*. There may be other instances still earlier; but I do not, at present, recollect any.

“FIRE AND WATER,” (a musical Piece, in two acts,) the production of Miles Peter Andrews, a *Dealer in Gunpowder*, conjured up such combined ideas of incendiaries on one hand, and military operations on the other,—of engines from the Insurance Offices, to quench conflagrations, and the discharge of muskets to quell a mob,—that many persons were indignant at the Title; considering it as the announcement of a dramatick *mauvaise plaisanterie*, allusive to the recent riots,—which, certainly, were much beyond a joke.

But the Author averr'd that “there was no such stuff in his thoughts;” and that he had written and entitled his farce just as he had made and sold his

* See three of his Comedies.—“*The staple of News*,” “*Every Man out of his Humour*,” and “*The Magnetick Lady*.”

gunpowder,—that is, long before the disturbances had occur'd. Whether this declaration, or the merits of the musick, and the acting, (for there was little merit in the writing,) check'd the tokens of disapprobation, I cannot say ;—but “Fire and Water,” contrary to expectation, and to the usual consequence of these elements coming together, did not produce a *hiss*. The Piece was repeated many times, during the season in which it was produced ;—since which, it has taken a comfortable nap upon the Prompter's shelf, and nobody has ever thought of disturbing it :—even the fond Author could, in justice, only heave a sigh over its repose, and say, in the words of Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament,

“ Balow, my babe, lie still and sleep !”

Andrews was, in truth, so wretched a writer, that his new Plays in London, like his Powder-Mills at Dartford, were particularly hazardous affairs, and in great danger of going off with a sudden and violent explosion*.—One of the most successful efforts to which we find his name attach'd is the Comick Opera call'd “ Summer

* He wrote, he it acknowledged, several Prologues and Epilogues, very effective *ad captandum vulgus*.

Amusement," brought out at the Hay-Market Theatre, in 1792; but this Piece he wrote conjointly with a Mr. William Augustus Miles, as inferior a dramatist as Andrews himself.—Hence it would appear that a couple of weak Authors, by clubbing their imbecilities, may strengthen a Play, rather than render it doubly weak;—in like manner two negatives, as we are told by grammarians, will make an affirmative.

William Augustus Miles dabbled in politicks more than in the drama. Having fill'd a subordinate situation in the Ordnance Office, from which he was dismiss'd, he publish'd virulent pamphlets against Government, and particularly against that department which had ejected him. Many of these bilious effusions he subscribed so as to make his own name look like an assumed signature: Sometimes it was printed backwards,—*Selim*; sometimes forwards,—but then it was tack'd to such peculiar military subjects as caused it to be mistaken for the Roman dissyllable *Mi-les*,—which few, if any, of my male readers need be told is Latin for a *Soldier*.

One day, when my Father and I were walking from Soho Square to the Hay-Market, the two above-mention'd witlings were coming the contrary

way, and on the opposite side of the street ;—they had each sent a new dramatick manuscript for acceptance, to the summer Theatre ; and being anxious to get the start of each other in the production of their separate works, they both call'd out to my father, “Remember, Colman, I am first oars.”—“Humph,” mutter'd the Manager, as they pass'd on,—“they may talk about *first oars*, but they have not a *skull* between them.”

Miss Lee's “CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS,” long and justly rated as a stock Comedy, is so well known, that it is quite needless to expatiate upon its merits ;—but the excellent acting in it, throughout, on its first production, may partly show how the Hay-Market Company of Performers had improved, since the first year of my father's management.—In the original cast of this Play, we find the potent names of Palmer, as Woodville, Edwin, as Jacob, and Miss Farren, as Cecilia ; nor should Aickin be forgotten, as Grey, nor even Mrs. Love, in the minor part of the Housekeeper. All these started with the new scheme, 1777 ;—in addition to whom, there were, in this same Comedy, Bensley, Wilson, Bannister junior, Lamash, Mrs. Cuyler, and Mrs. Wilson, who had all been engaged subsequently to the

year above-mention'd.—These last were performers of acknowledg'd talent, in their separate lines, except Mrs. Cuyler,—but she was a fine woman,—a full-grown Irish Venus, without the Graces,—and, though an indifferent actress, good enough for the indifferent part of Miss Mortimer, which was allotted to her.—Bensley, who always maintain'd an upper rank upon the stage, both in Tragedy and Comedy, was respectable in *all* the characters he undertook, in spite of a stalk, and a stare,—a stiffness of manner, and a nasal twang of utterance,—which prevented his being very popular in *most* of them;—but these drawbacks were advantages to him, in representing the buckram nobility of Lord Mortimer, in Miss Lee's Play;—and, for the same reason, his personation of Malvolio, the starch and conceited Steward, in Twelfth Night, was beyond all competition.—As he was an old friend of my father, and afterwards of myself, a short digression, relative to him, will here, I trust, be tolerated:—

Bensley commenced his course of worldly action in the service of his King and Country, at the taking of the Havannah; but soon relinquish'd the amphibious achievements of a Lieutenant in

the Marines, for the less glorious enterprises of a theatrical Adventurer. His first essay upon the Stage (in 1765) was at Drury Lane, as *Pierre*, in *Venice Preserved*;—he was drill'd in this Character by my father, to whose house at Richmond* he was invited, both as a friend and a pupil, during the process.—There were, then, upon a small mount in Richmond Park, the well known “*Six Tubs* ;”—these were, in fact, *half* tubs, with a seat in each, painted green, and placed upright. Thither Bensley was in the habit of repairing alone, at sunrise, to rehearse *Pierre* ;—till, at last, he excited the suspicion of one of the Keepers of the Park, who wonder'd to see a stranger, at so early an hour, every morning, clenching his fists at the Green Seats, in a very angry manner.—The Keeper, therefore, deem'd it to be his duty to watch the stranger's motions, by lying in ambush among the fern, close to the spot; and on hearing him not only say to the tubs,

— “You, my Lords, and *Fathers*,

As you are pleased to call yourselves, of *Venice*,”

but also, perceiving him to single out one parti-

* My father, then, had hired a house in a part of Richmond call'd the Vineyard, in which he lived before he built his house on the banks of the Thames.

cular Tub, as the "Great Duke,"—of whose Wife* he made a very scurrilous mention,—he concluded the poor gentleman to be as mad as a March hare. Finding, however, upon repeated watching, that he did no mischief,—conceiving too, that abusing the old Doge, and the Venetian Senators, was not High Treason in England,—and, moreover, recollecting that he himself (the Keeper) was a Keeper of Parks, and not a Keeper of Madmen,—he let the matter pass, without further notice.

Bensley, while on the Stage, married *by accident*.—He was travelling in a hack post-chaise, which, on turning a sharp corner of the road, near Bristol, came in violent contact with a Lady on horseback;—the fair-one was thrown, the Traveller leap'd from his chaise to her assistance,—when, as Rosalind says in the Play, "they no sooner met than they look'd, no sooner look'd than they loved, no sooner loved"—in short, they became man and wife.—There are various modes of courtship; but it is not, I believe, a common practice to win a lady's heart by knocking her

* "And saw your Wife, *the Adriatick*," &c. &c.

OTWAY'S *Venice Preserved*.

down.—His conjugal partner brought him fifteen hundred pounds ;—a mere nothing, even in those days, when matrimonial housekeeping is counter-balanced against the bed and board of a bachelor. With this, and his income as an actor, they lived in frugal comfort, and in a select circle of acquaintance, distinct from his theatrical brethren, (from whose society, it was occasionally remark'd, he kept somewhat superciliously aloof,) till he withdrew from his scenick labours in 1796 :—He was, then, appointed to the situation of a Barrack Master, by his friend Mr. Wyndham, who was, at that period, Secretary at War.

Some years before his death, a large fortune was bequeath'd to him, by his relative, Sir William Bensley, a Baronet, and an East India Director. Undazzled by riches, Bensley enjoy'd his affluence with the liberal moderation of a perfect gentleman :—in the vale of existence,—without children, and desirous only of a competent provision for his amiable and excellent wife,—he declared that his superfluous wealth “ *came too late.*”—His widow, who survived him some years, is now no more.

In the earliest part of his theatrical life, he

lodged in the south-east Covent Garden Piazzas, which have been burnt down; and he there saved his life, by jumping out of his bed-room window, on the first floor, during the conflagration. From the foregoing description of his starch manners, who would suppose that he was, in his youth, “an idle, flashy, young dog,” and that Garrick had nicknamed him “*Roaring Bob of the Garden.*”

To return to my enumeration of the original performers in the Chapter of Accidents:—

Wilson was very effective as Governor Harcourt;—he succeeded to Shuter’s Characters at Covent-Garden Theatre, and was so like him in look and person,—as also in the chuckling laugh, toss of the head, and shrug of the shoulders,—that the similitude, at first, (Wilson being decidedly the inferior of the two,) operated to his disadvantage, by exciting a painful remembrance of the lost old favourite, and a regret for his absence.—Yet Shuter, I have been told, at the commencement of his career, as strongly reminded the audience of his predecessor Hippiesley, as Wilson provoked a recollection of Shuter.—Lamash was the Prince of Underling Coxcombs, conceited Valets-de-chambre, &c. &c ;

—he was the original Jessamy, in *Bon Ton*, and *Trip*, in the *School for Scandal*.—Mrs. Wilson, as *Bridget*, could not fail of success: she had a very pretty face, with a neat little figure; and was greatly approved in the *Soubrettes*, and in characters of mix'd archness and simplicity,—such as *The Country Girl*, in which Mrs. Jordan was, afterwards, so pre-eminent.

Besides the Performers, mention'd in Miss Lee's Play, as engaged since the year 1777, the following are to be added, as valuable acquisitions to the Hay-Market Company:—

Baddeley,—of the Garrick School,—a good actor, of various crabbed old men, and also the original *Canton* in the *Clandestine Marriage*, and *Moses* in the *School for Scandal*.—*Hewitzer*, the best representative of Comick Jews, and Foreigners that, perhaps, ever was, or ever will be;—he superseded *Baddeley* in this last walk, but was below par in every thing else;—*Mrs. Cargill*, the once celebrated Beauty, Actress, and Singer;—*Miss Harper*, soon afterwards Mrs. J. Bannister, who rank'd, during her professional career of sixteen years, as the first female singer in England,—on the Stage, at Concerts, &c. &c. She

made her *début*, and took her leave, at the Hay-Market Theatre. Too soon withdrawn from public exertion, she still continues to support the domestick character which has so long endear'd her to her family, and friends.—Last, and certainly not *least*, *Mrs. Webb*, of corpulent memory ;—the original *Mrs. Cheshire* of *O'Keefe*—with a banging voice, and a *prodigious* circumference of person.—She exceeded *Mrs. Davenport* in size as much as *Mrs. Davenport* excels *her*, (and, in certain characters, every body whom I remember,) in her line of acting.

Bannister junior, whom, while detailing the *dramatis personæ* in this Play*, I have purposely left to the last,—as I shall have more frequent mention to make of him, in my Records, than of the others,—enacted the insipid part of Captain Harcourt ;—whereby he suffer'd the fate (not very uncommon for an Actor who, before he is of age, begins his profession in London) of buckling to a drudgery very much below his innate excellence : but his abilities were then in the bud, and his *line* undecided ;—so he took, for the convenience of the theatre, *any* line, good, bad, or indifferent, either in Tragedy, Comedy, or Farce ;—no trifling proof of his versatility.

After his long establish'd celebrity, as a Comedian, and the regret felt, by lovers of the Drama, on his retirement from the Stage, it is curious to recur to his earliest days, in the Hay-Market Theatre; when he was frequently tied to a sword, and ramm'd into a full-dress coat, to represent Lord Falbridge, in the English Merchant, and other *deadly lively* characters, little above those which are call'd, in stage language, "*walking gentlemen.*"—There was a very persevering sky-colour'd suit of laced clothes, which was always lugg'd out of the Haymarket wardrobe for him, upon such occasions;—and Jack Bannister in his light blue and silver, with a sword by his side, was, to all play-goers of that time, as infallible a token of a clever young actor, in a bad part, as deep mourning is the sign of death in a family:—But, in the course of the same nights, when he was thus misplaced, he often perform'd some other character effective in itself, and render'd more so by his own powers.

THE GENIUS OF NONSENSE*, produced in this same season, (1780,) corroborates the foregoing

* Written by my father. It was observed upon it, in some of the newspapers, that the "Genius of Nonsense" was the "Nonsense of Genius."

statement. Of this, as it was advertised, “original, whimsical, operatical, pantomimical, military, temporary, local Extravaganza,” Oulton’s vulgar and inaccurate “History of the Theatres of London” (from the year 1771 to 1795) speaks thus :—

“The late celebrated Doctor Graham was humourously satirized in this piece; but *what was* somewhat remarkable *was*, that the Doctor himself *was* in the stage-box the first night, and besides the mortification of seeing his TEMPLE OF HEALTH so masterly ridiculed, he had the additional chagrin of being refused^c purchasing one of the bills deliver’d upon the stage, as a burlesque of his own.”

Those who cannot remember the above-mention’d Doctor, may, probably, have heard of him, as one of the most *outré* Quacks, in his time. His house (or *Temple*, as he denominated it,) was gaudily fitted up, on the Terrace, in the Adelphi;—there he gave evening Lectures upon Electricity;—there he exhibited his satin sofas on glass legs, and his Celestial Bed which was to effect Heaven only knows what;—there his two Porters, outside the door, in long tawdry great coats, and immense

gold-lace cock'd hats, distributed his puffs, in handbills;—while his Goddess of Health was dying of a sore throat, by squalling songs at the top of his cold staircase.

All these matters were introduced in the Genius of Nonsense, and help me in explaining the “*additional chagrin*,” mention'd by Oulton;—which, without elucidation, would be quite unintelligible some years hence.—The Quack, having heard of the forthcoming satire, threaten'd to bring an Action for a libel, and came to the theatre to collect all the evidence he could, in support of his menaced prosecution:—he, therefore, protruded his arm, repeatedly; from the stage-box, to procure a hand-bill from the representatives of his own Porters, which they as repeatedly refused to give him.

Bannister junior was selected as the Speaking Harlequin of this Piece; in which character he was to transform himself, among other metamorphoses, into Doctor Graham,—whom he had never seen, nor, I believe, intended to see. He doubted, perhaps, whether it might be prudent to ridicule personally, upon the stage, a man who was meditating an Action at Law against his

satirists; and thought that a broad outline, sketch'd after his own fancy, of any ideal *Charlatan*, would answer the purpose:—my father thought otherwise, and insisted upon a portrait of the individual Empirick.—The young Actor, therefore, in obedience to his Manager's instructions, communicated only on the day previous to the production of the Extravaganza, visited the Temple of Health, to bestow one transient evening's glance upon the Doctor.—I was delighted by his allowing me to accompany him on this expedition.—We saw the *Græme* (which is Sir Walter Scott's poetical way of spelling *Graham**) go through his nonsensical solemnities; in which nothing struck me as worthy theatrical adoption,—till the very same things were done, on the next night, after the above-mention'd cursory view of them, by Bannister. His mere entrance upon the Scene, as the Doctor was wont to present himself in his *Temple*,—his grotesque mode of sliding round the room,—the bobbing bows he shot off to the Com-

* “*The Græme*;—The ancient and powerful family of the Grahamis (which, for *metrical reasons*, is here spell'd after the scottish pronunciation,) &c.”—See Note 2 to *Canto second*, in *The Lady of the Lake*.

pany, while making his circuit,—and various other minutiae, were so ridiculously accurate, that he surpass'd his prototype in *electrifying* the publick,—and the whole house was in a roar of laughter.

When the novelty of the Doctor's electricks was worn out, he tried another mode to obtain money, by burying himself perpendicularly, in mould, up to his chin; in which uncomfortable and ludicrous situation he gave lectures upon the salubrity, and life-prolonging virtues, of what he call'd an *Earth Bath*. His practice did not support his theory; for, soon after this, he was horizontally popp'd under ground,—head and all,—by the Sexton.

That the Quack was a consummate Quiz, could scarcely fail to be perceived by the dullest vision;—but I accused myself of having been stone-blind to all the *stage-effect* producible from him, which the eagle eye of Bannister had seen through, in a minute :—

I forgot, however, that the power of *genuine* Imitation is, in the first instance, a gift,—although it may be, afterwards, improved by study ;—and that one of its characteristicks is the quickness

of seizing upon peculiarities too slight for general observation ; but which, when once pointed out, are so manifest, that we wonder how we could have overlook'd them.

But there is, also, a *spurious* kind of Imitation, which may account for the number of *'Takers-off' at second hand*.—One third of the London Actors, within the last fifty years, have been able to give a specimen of their contemporary brethren, which they never could have done, if Jack Bannister, Mathews, Yates, and, perhaps, a few others, had not shown them *how*,—mimickry having been ground into them, as piping bullfinches are taught tunes, through the organs of their masters.

Among my hundred in the Hay-Market Theatre, there was an inferior Actor, *tolerated* by the audience, both in dialogue and song, of the name of Davies,—well known as “ *Kiddy Davies*,” or “ *The Kiddy*”. He had served under Garrick, and always spoke contemptuously of the then immediate theatrical times, in comparing them with those of his Great Master.—This man had remain'd unmimick'd for very many years, till *Caulfield*, the excellent Imitator, join'd my Company, and hit off the *Kiddy's* oddities in an instant.

He jerk'd up one shoulder, twisted his mouth a little awry, and begun with—" Well, I'll be d—d,—things were different in the late Mr. Garrick's time ;—yes—in the time of the immortal Mr. Garrick, deceased."—The manner and utterance were so very exact, and so strikingly ludicrous, that all the performers, who had never thought of taking off the *Kiddy*, went Kiddy Davies mad, directly.—It was like Sterne's account of the Andromeda of Euripedes, which made all the Abderites run about their town, crying, " Cupid, Prince of Gods, and Men !"—For one whole summer-season I could not go behind my own scenes without being annoy'd by every Actor,—every little supernumerary brat, hired for a fairy, or a fiend,—accosting me with—" *Well, I'll be d—d,—things were different in the late Mr. Garrick's time,*" &c.

The faculty of the intuitive Imitators whom I have just mention'd, by name, seems to be that of almost identifying themselves with the persons whose likeness they have exhibited ;—of presenting the very *mind*, with the tone and gesture, of the originals ;—the others are mere mechanical copyists of those who draw from the life ;—'tis

the difference (if I may illustrate from the present day) between Sir Thomas Lawrence, and an Engraver of his pictures.

Hence I would argue, after having noticed two sorts of the “*Imitatores*,” that the opprobrious appellation of “*Servum Pecus*”^{*} belongs only to the second class, who decant resemblances through the strainers of the first ;—and that a superior Stage-Mimick possesses the qualities (however more or less he may happen to cultivate and display them) of a superior Actor :—for, after all, what is histrionick excellence but the closest mimicry of mankind,—branching from the passions, into the humours, and singularities, of individuals ?

As to the adversaries of this doctrine, (and there are very many,) I beg only to remind them of *Garrick* ;—an exquisite Mimick, and, at the same time, the most wonderful Actor (all his varieties consider’d) which this Country, or perhaps any other, ever produced.

That the younger Bannister has, also, very eminently combined the talents of Imitator and

* “*O, imitatores, servum pecus !*”

Comedian, nobody, conversant with theatrical history, can attempt to deny :—but I reserve further recurrence to his professional progress for a more advanced part of my Records, when I shall speak of my own dramatick attempts ; and of certain characters I have scribbled,—the success of which I chiefly attribute to his personation of them. Meanwhile, it is gratifying to me (and I hope will not be tedious to others) to recount the causes of our still sailing down the stream of life together ;—it is nearly *half a century* since we first join'd company on the voyage,—in those our jocund days when our trade-wind of gaiety had just set in ;—and we *monsoon'd* it along, with

“ Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm.”

Our casual greetings, behind the scenes of the Hay-Market Theatre, soon advanced to better acquaintance, through my having gone with him on his mission to the Quack Doctor ;—and, although, in the subsequent autumn and winter, our different destinations kept him in the metropolis, and sent me to Christ-Church, still we maintain'd an intercourse, as often as I stole a march, with some fellow collegian, as wild and idle as myself, from Oxford to London.—On these expeditions, the

company of Jack Bannister, on our arrival, was always a grand desideratum ;—his frolicksome spirit was congenial with that of a young “ Oxonian in Town,” and his talents were a high treat : we thought ourselves fortunate, therefore, whenever we could get him to join us, in the intervals, of his business. In the long vacation of the following summer, (1781), when I was “ in town upon the sober plan, at my father’s,”—as my father himself, if not Bonnell Thornton, has express’d it*,—we were in a constant habit of meeting, both in the Hay-Market Theatre, and out of it.

After this, all communication between us was suspended, for two years, and a quarter,—while I was an exile, by paternal sentence, at “ bonny Aberdeen.”

In the year of my return thence, (1784,)—unconscious of fear through ignorance of danger,—I rush’d into early publicity, as an avow’d dramatist, —my father’s illness, in 1789, obliged me to undertake the management of his theatre ; which having purchased at his demise, in 1794, I continued

* See “ *The Connoisseur*,” Number 11, vol. i.

to manage as my own.—During such progression, up to the year 1796, inclusive, I scribbled many dramas for the Hay-Market, and one for Drury-Lane; in almost all of which the younger Bannister (being engaged at both theatres) perform'd a prominent character :—so that, for most of the thirteen years I have enumerated, he was of the greatest importance to my theatrical prosperity, in my double capacity of Author and Manager; while I was of some service to him, by supplying him with new characters.—These reciprocal interests made us, of course, such close colleagues, that our almost daily consultations promoted amity, while they forwarded business.

From this last-mention'd period, (1796,) we were led by our speculations, one after the other, into different tracks.—He had arrived at that height of London popularity when his visits to various provincial theatres, in the summer, were productive of much more money than my scale of expense, in the Hay-Market, could afford to give him. As he winter'd it, however, in Drury Lane, I profited, for two years more, by his acting in the Pieces which I produced there. I, then, began

to write for the rival house in Covent Garden, and this parted us as Author and Actor :—But, separating as we did, through accident, and with the kindest sentiments for each other, it was not likely that we should forget, or neglect, further to cultivate our mutual regard :—That Regard is, now, so mellow'd by Time, that it will never cease till Time himself,—who, in ripening our friendship, has been all the while whetting his scythe for the friends,—shall have mow'd down the men, and gather'd in his harvest.*

One trait of Bannister, in our worldly dealings with each other, will nearly bring me to the close of this chapter.

In the year 1807, after having slaved at some dramatick composition,—I forget what,—I had resolved to pass one entire week in luxurious sloth.—I was, then, so disgusted with pen, ink, and paper, that had I been an absolute monarch,—with cruelty equal to my despotism,—I would have made it felony for any subject who presented a petition to me written with, or upon, any Stationer's ware, whatsoever.

* He came back to me, at the Haymarket, for one Summer Season, in 1804.

At this crisis,—just as I was beginning the first morning's sacrifice upon the altar of my darling Goddess, Indolence,—Enter Jack Bannister, with a huge manuscript under his left arm !—This, he told me, consisted of loose materials for an Entertainment, with which he meant to “ skirr the country,” under the title of BANNISTER'S BUDGET ;—but, unless I reduced the chaos into some order for him,—and that *instantly*,—he should lose his tide, and, with it, his emoluments for the season.—In such a case, there was no balancing between two alternatives,—so I deserted my darling Goddess, to drudge, through the week, for my old Companion.

To concoct the crudities he had brought me,—by polishing, expunging, adding,—in short, almost re-writing them,—was, it must be confess'd, labouring under the “ horrors of digestion ;” —but the toil was completed, at the week's end, and away went Jack Bannister, into the country, with his BUDGET.

Several months afterwards, he return'd to Town ; and I inquired, of course,—what success ? —so great, he answer'd, that, in consequence of

the gain which had accrued to him, through my means, and which he was certain would still accrue, (as he now consider'd the Budget to be an annual income, for some years to come,) he must insist upon cancelling a Bond which I had given him, for money he had lent to me.—I was astounded ; for I had never dreamt of fee or reward.

To prove that he was in earnest, I extract a paragraph from a letter, which he wrote to me, from Shrewsbury.

“ For fear of accidents, I think it necessary to inform you that Fladgate, your Attorney, is in possession of your Bond to me of £700—as I consider it *fully discharged*, it is but proper you should have this acknowledgment under my hand.

J. B.”

Should my unostentatious friend think me indelicate in publishing this anecdote, I can only say, that, it naturally appertains to the sketch I have given of our co-operations in life ;—and, that, the insertion of it, here, seems almost indispensable, in order to elucidate my previous state-

ment of our having blended so much *sentiment* with so much *traffic*.—I feel, too, that it would be downright injustice to him, if I suppress'd it ; and would betoken, in myself, the pride of those narrow-minded persons who are ashamed of acknowledging how greatly they have profited by the liberal spirit of others.

The Bond above-mentioned was given, be it observed, on a private account ;—not for money due to an Actor for his professional assistance.—Gilliland, in his “*Dramatick Mirror*,” says, that, my admission of Partners “enabled the Proprietors to completely liquidate all the demands which had for some time past involved the house in temporary embarrassments.”—This is a gross mistake ;—the Hay-Market Theatre was *never* embarrass'd (on the contrary, it was a prosperous speculation) while under my direction.—My own difficulties, during part of this time, are another matter : I may touch *slightly* on this hereafter ;—but shall not bore my readers by dwelling long on matters which (however they may have annoy'd *me*) cannot entertain or interest *them*.

I regret following up one instance of Mr. Gilliland's inaccuracy immediately with' another,—

but he asserts, in his “*Dramatick Mirror*,” that J. Bannister, “in the season 1778, made his appearance for the Benefit of his father, *on the boards of Old Drury*.” In contradiction to the foregoing statement, a document now lies before me,—I transcribe it verbatim :—

“First appearance, *at the Hay-Market*, for my father’s Benefit 1778, in *The Apprentice*. First appearance at Drury Lane, 1779, in *Zaphna*, in *Mahomet*. Took leave of the Stage, at Drury Lane, Thursday, June 1st, 1815.—Garrick instructed me in the four first Parts I play’d.—*The Apprentice*; *Zaphna*, (*Mahomet*;) *Dorilas*, (*Me-ropé*;) and *Achmet*, (*Barbarossa*.)—Jack Bannister, to his dear friend George Colman. June 30th, 1828.”

In the “*Budget*,” I have so much alter’d some of the Songs, that they might almost be call’d my own. I do not arrogate to myself the merit of having *improved* them so much as Sir John Cutler mended his worsted stockings,—till he darn’d them into silk ;—and, if I plead guilty of having had a hand in the texture, let the primary manufacturers remember, that I have left enough of their own

original stuff to convict them as partakers of the crime :—

But I make a voluntary confession of having perpetrated Two Songs, in this Entertainment, without any accomplice whatever.—I have retouch'd them ; and as they may fill a page or two as well as many other *mortal* matters herein extant*, I print them, now, for the first time :—they immediately follow.

* So Falstaff speaks of his soldiers :—“ they'll fill a pit as well as better : tush, man, *mortal* men, mortal men ? ”—

CHAPTER SECOND.

Clown. What hast here? Ballads?

Mopsa. Pray now, buy some: I love a ballad in print, a-life,
for then we are sure they are *true*."

SHAKSPEARE'S WINTER'S TALE.

————— de sedibus imis,
Umbræ ibant tenues, defunctaque corpora vitâ.

VIRGIL.

————— Credat Judæus Apella!—

HORACE.

THE SUPPER OF THE GHOSTS*.

The CROWN'D HEADS, since the Conquest, who ruled
England's Nation,
Met on one of our Coasts, for a jollification;
At midnight, these Ghosts had a Supper, in State,
So the Yeoman-Guard Spectres were order'd to wait.
Tolderol, &c.

* This Song was written in 1807:—I have alter'd several of its Stanzas; the last of which refers to the present period.

Cynthia shone out above them, to scatter the dark,
 And they sat on the sands, above high-water mark;
 For they knew, when Canute said the Tide should be
 stopp'd,
 How finely His Majesty's shoes had been sopp'd!

The defunct Kings and Queens had a worm-eaten Train,
 Of the Statesmen, Wits, Heroes, and Toasts, of their
 reign:
 Queen Elizabeth Burleigh and Leicester brought in,
 Charles the Second made Rochester come, with Nell
 Gwynn.

The Chair Norman Billy the Conqueror claim'd,
 For extinguishing Candles, at eight o'clock, famed;
 "But we Ghosts," observed Billy, "don't go to bed
 soon,
 So I sha'n't toll a Curfew, to put out the Moon."

King Rufus desired that no Venison they'd put on,
 For when hunting it last he was shot dead as mutton:
 "No Lampreys," cried Henry the First: "for alack!
 They kill'd me about seven hundred years back."

King Stephen said nought;—and, if truth were con-
 fess'd,
 Of his right to be King, the least said was the best;

Besides, how unfit on a Throne to sit down,
When he reckon'd his breeches too dear at a crown*.

When Saint Thomas à Becket began to say grace,
King Henry the Second put on a long face † :
Cœur-de-Lion roar'd out,—“ Who 's to carve, while I
eat ?
For I cut up a Saracen better than meat‡.”

Cried John to his Barons, “ We'll have now, my Lords,
The best *Magnum Bonum* § this Country affords.”—

“ King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
For which he call'd the taylor lown.”

Shakspeare puts the above stanza in the mouth of Iago ; which is quoted from the Ballad of “ *Take thy Old Cloak about thee* ;”—for which see the first volume of “ *Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry*.”

* This Monarch,—after being strongly implicated in causing the assassination of Becket,—perform'd a most humiliating and hypocritical penance at Canterbury for the murder.

‡ Who has not heard of Richard the First, (*Cœur de Lion*,) and his prowess against the Saracens, in the Holy Wars ?

§ To the *very* unlearned, in drinking and the dead languages, it may be necessary to explain, that, *Magnum Bonum* is latin for a “ *Great Good*,” and means also, among jolly fellows, a Bottle containing two quarts of wine.

“ Our best *Magnum Bonum*, my Liege,” they all said.
 “ Is your own *MAGNA CHARTA* ;”—but John shook his
 head.

Henries, Edwards, and Richards,—the last of them
 humpy *—

Fuddled noses together, though some appear'd grumpy ;
 For the Lancaster Ghosts tipped *red* wine, all night,
 While the York Apparitions touch'd nothing but *white*.

“ For the Roses,” said Henry the Seventh, “ I entwined
 them ;

And, like Port mix'd with Sherry, in marriage I join'd
 them :”—

“ Marriage,” Henry the Eighth said, “ so blesses our
 lives,

That I never beheaded but Two of my Wives.”

King Edward the Sixth with the rest couldn't sup,
 For a Ghost of sixteen was too young to sit up ;
 But Queen Mary was there,—in our annals a blot,—
 Great Queen Bess, — and pedantick King Janie, the Scot.

Charles the First — but the dew, falling thick on the shore,
 Seem'd the Tears of our Isle for his Murder of yore :

* Richard the Third.

Charles the Second wept, too,—nought could comfort
afford him,—

Till a Bumper (like General Monk) had *restored* him.

A Card of Excuse came from Jamie the Second ;
But the Party had scarce on *his* company reckon'd :
For, paler than Lemons, he quitted the throne,
And the Oranges, instantly, made it their own.

The Third William stood up, and, sans circumlocution,
To the Memory drank of our famed REVOLUTION ;
Queen Anne gave her MARLBOROUGH ;—old England's
fame
No Hero raised higher, —till WELLINGTON came.

As the Spirits broke up, ere the Sun shot his rays,
To the Shades of THREE GEORGES they gave loud huzzas ;
And the White Cliffs of Britain re-echoed the strain,
Of GOD BLESS GEORGE THE FOURTH ! and long, long,
may he reign !

THE MARVELLOUS PHYSICIANS.

THREE PHYSICIANS of London for Yorkshire set out,
Where an Earl's noble stomach was storm'd by the Gout :
And, to guard the good Peer from all future assault,
They physick'd him into his Family Vault.

Derry Down, &c.

Well paid by his Heir, they departed for Town,
Saying “ we'll *travel up* since my Lord *travels down* ;
But, at Newark we'll sup, where let each down his
 throttle
Pour a large dose of Port, without shaking the bottle.

At their Inn, three roast fowls Doctor Calomel chose,
Which fat Doctor Fingerfee didn't oppose ;
And cried Doctor Isaacs, (though he was a Jew,)
“ Pray garnish dem fowls, mid a sausage or two.”

Though the wine was as thick as the three Doctors
 heads,
They had three pints apiece, and then call'd for their
 beds.
Molly Chambermaid stared when,—with looks mighty
 grand,—

Doctor Calomel bid her pull off his Right Hand.

When Calomel's hand was pull'd off to put by,
Doctor Fingerfee growl'd, — "Hussey, take out my
Eye ;"

Doctor Isaacs, more mild, said — "Wrap dese up in
towels, —

And mind you don't loose dem, my love, — dey're my
Bowels."

In the Pantry, the Chambermaid stow'd all these articles,
Of the three Learned Doctors, profound in Catharticals ;
But a Hound, while they slept, and ne'er dream'd of
the matter,
Swallow'd up all their property out of the platter.

Cried the maid, the next morning — "I've lost through
Magicians,

A Hand, and an Eye, of two Christian Physicians ;
Then the wizen Jew Doctor, as thin as a lizard,
How he'll grumble in all he has left, — that's his gizzard !"

But Invention arrived in the midst of her crosses,
And bade her repair, not lament o'er her losses ;
"A Blind Thief hangs," says she, "on the Gibbet hard
by ; —

I'll go cut off his hand, — but, then, how get an eye ?"

By chance, a Tom-Cat had expired in the night ;
And his eye served for Fingerfee's lost orb of sight ;
Then a Hog had been butcher'd, — a Porker well grown, —
Whose chitterlins Jews might mistake for their own.

Doctor Calomel rose, — in this Farce the first Actor, —
And put on the Hand of the Blind Malefactor ;
Doctor Fingerfee, next, drew his purse from his pocket, —
Tipp'd Molly, — and popp'd the Cat's Eye in his socket.

Isaacs stow'd the intestines ; — all three left the Inn, —
“ I've cheated two Christians,” said Moll with a grin ;
“ And how mad the Jew Doctor would be, should he know
That half his inside is Hog's liver and crow !”

Soon a Dame, grown with plethora red in the face,
Call'd the three Doctors in to consider her case ;
They withdrew to consult ; — first they talk'd of the
 weather,
And, next, of their supping at Newark together.

Doctor Calomel mutter'd, — “ I can't understand,
Since we came from the North, what can ail my right
 hand ;
Not content with its fees, — as I walk through the street,
It dives into all the folks' pockets I meet.”

“ My disorder,” said Fingerfee, “ claims more remark,---
I never can close my left eye in the dark :
So wakeful I’ve grown, that this morning, at four,
I sprang out of bed, at a mouse on the floor.”

Doctor Isaacs exclaim’d, in a pitiful note,
“ Dear broders, you see how I’ve dirtied my coat ;---
’Tis a vonderful ting, -- but I can’t pass a slough,
Till I roll myshelf in it, just like an old sow.”

NOW success to the LEARNED of famed WARWICK LANE !
Their Profession far be it from me to profane ! --
I shall hurt no Physician, I trust, in the Nation,
By a laugh at such methods of INOCULATION.

CHAPTER THIRD.

“ Since Nero scorn’d not
The publick Theatre, we in private may
Disport ourselves.”

MASSINGER’S ROMAN ACTOR.

“ Hurrah for the Bonnets of Blue !”

SCOTCH BALLAD.

A little before Christmas, in 1780—remember, patient reader, this is the close of the year in which I have already detain’d you through the ninth and tenth Chapters,—my father made a halt at Oxford, on his road to Wales, and took me with him from Christchurch to Wynnestay,—that seat of festive opulence which so much delighted me ;—for, young as I was, the kindness and favouritism with which I was received there, independent of the courtesies shown to my father, were so mark’d, and unaffected, that I cannot recur to them, at this late day, without feelings of very grateful retrospection.

But this my journey thither, for the third, and (as it happen'd) last time, was a mixture of the *allegro* and *penseroso*. My joyous anticipation of the Wynnstay gaieties would have blazed out, upon the road, if they had not been considerably damp'd by the constrain'd manner of my father ; who had not forgotten certain of my flights which had displeased him, during my visit to town, in the preceeding long vacation. He did not, it is true, expect me to elucidate his own definition of an " Agreeable Companion in a Postchaise,*" which is, a person who sleeps all the way, and defrays half the expenses ;—but I was in disgrace with him, and we were, therefore, far from being pleasant fellow-travellers. We talk'd little, and sometimes journey'd several miles without speaking ;—but, whenever we changed horses, the bustle of procuring the *relais*, the crack of the post-boys' whips, and the rapid whirl of the carriage, from the door of the Inn, gave a momentary stim-

* In the " Genius of Nonsense," produced in the year of which I am writing. At that time, it was not unusual to advertise for an associate on a journey ; and there was a Register Office where people went to apply for an " Agreeable Companion in a Postchaise."

ulus to the spirits of my Sire ; and as constantly as we began a fresh Stage, he as constantly struck up "*loora la loo*,"—an attempt at an old tune, to which Gay has adapted his Song of "Early one morn a jolly brisk tar ;"—this melody he always executed without the words ;—and in so dismal a style, that there was nothing left in the name of *Gay* which could possibly be attach'd to the musick :—he generally began with *forte*, subsiding gradually with *piano*, and *pianissimo*, till, at the end of a quarter of a mile, he sank into perfect silence.

At length, we arrived ;—and as I have touch'd but slightly, in the first volume, on the Wynnstay festivities, I venture upon a few *addenda*.

The Theatre at Wynnstay has, in its time, been destined to provide food both for the body and the mind ; it was originally a *Kitchen*,—built on the occasion of its late Possessor's coming of age, —which event was celebrated with all observance of eating and drinking, to be expected on the twenty-first anniversary of the birth of a Sir Watkin Williams Wynn ; whom his attach'd Cambro-British tenants were wont to mention (without

meaning, honest souls ! to say anything profane,) as the Deity of North Wales. This building, although intended to be temporary, was I know not how many years old when I saw it, and it still, I believe, exists.—It afforded no capabilities, except space, for altering it from a kitchen into a Theatre ; the alteration, however, was made with good taste ; it presented a plain simple interior, with no work in it, as there was in its pristine state, for the *carver* ;—and, as it could not boast altitude proportional with its breadth, and horizontal length, the Audience part had neither Boxes nor Galleries, but consisted, merely, of a commodious Pit. This construction had one advantage which cannot, I presume, be obtain'd in any of our large publick playhouses,—namely—there was no row of flaring lamps, technically call'd *the float*, immediately before the Performers' feet, in front of the proscenium ; but this same float was affix'd to a large beam, form'd into an arch, over their heads ;—on that side of the arch nearest to the Stage ;—so that the Audience did not see the lamps, which cast a strong vertical light upon the Actors.—This is as we receive light from Nature ;

whereas the operation of the *float* is exactly upon a reversed principle, and throws all the shades of the Actor's countenance the wrong way ;—a fault which seems to be irremediable ;—for, if a beam to hold lamps, as at Wynnstay, were placed over the proscenium of Drury Lane, or Covent Garden Theatre, the Marybone Goddesses in the upper tiers of Boxes, and the two and one shilling Gods in the galleries, would be completely intercepted from a view of the Stage.—But, however incurable this defect may appear, it is possible, that, in this age of improvement, some ingenious Architect (while Theatres are springing up like mushrooms) may hit upon a remedy ;—at all events, it is a grand *desideratum*.

My further recollections of the Wynnstay theatricals have been greatly assisted, since adverting to them in the seventh chapter of my first volume, by the kindness of Mr. Charles Wynn, second son of the deceased, and brother to the living Sir Watkin Williams Wynn. —At the time of my visits to Wynnstay, Mr. Charles Wynn was so young a child, that I remember his being permitted, one day after dinner, to scramble, on his hands and

knees, across the plenteous table of his indulgent parents.—To him I am thankfully indebted for allowing me to inspect a curious record of the dramatick performances at Wynnstay; consisting partly of printed Play-Bills, and partly of the *Casts* of Plays, in manuscript, from the year 1770 to the year 1808, inclusive.

I insert, here, with his liberal permission, the Copies of Two Play-Bills, which were publish'd during the *two* last seasons, out of *three*, in which I was *engaged* at the Theatre; and, also, (in addition to my own recollections) the substance of that information relative to the Performers therein mention'd, with which he has obliged me:—They will not, I presume, be altogether uninteresting to theatrical researchers.

AT THE THEATRE AT WYNNSTAY.

On TUESDAY, January 18th, 1780, will be presented

CYMBELINE.

Cymbeline, Mr. CLOUGH.

Cloten, CARTER.

Posthumous, Mr. BUNBURY.

Arviragus, Mr. GRIFFITH.

RANDOM RECORDS.

Guiderius, Mr. G. COLMAN.

Belarius, Mr. NARES.

Philario, Mr. APPERLY.

Iachimo, Mr. ALDERSEY.

Caius Lucius, MEREDITH.

Pisanio, Mr. COLMAN.

Frenchman, ROBERTS.

Cornelius, C. SIDEBOTHAM.

Queen, Mrs. GRIFFITH.

Imogen, Mrs. COTES.

Helen, Miss JONES.

To which will be added,

THE SPANISH BARBER.

Almaviva, Mr. ALDERSEY.

Bartholo, CARTER.

Basil, Mr. COLMAN.

Lazarillo, Mr. G. COLMAN.

Argus, MEREDITH.

Tallboy, ROBERTS.

Alcade, C. SIDEBOTHAM.

Notary, WILKINSON.

Rosina, Miss RAVENSCROFT.

To begin precisely at Six o'Clock.

N.B. No Person to be admitted without a Ticket,
which may be had of S. Sidebotham, at Wynnstay.

AT THE THEATRE, AT WYNNSTAY.

On MONDAY, January 15th, 1781, will be presented,

RULE A WIFE,

AND

HAVE A WIFE.

Duke of Medina, Mr. GRIFFITH.

Don Juan, Mr. NAREŠ.

Alonzo, ROBERTS.

Copper Captain, Mr. ALDERSEY.

Leon, Mr. BUNBURY.

Cacafogo, CARTER.

Margarita, Mrs. APPERLEY.

Altea, Miss E. RAVENSCROFT.

Estifania, Mrs. COTES.

Old Woman, Mr. G. COLMAN.

Maid, Wilkinson.

To which will be added,

BON TON.

Lord Minikin, Mr. G. COLMAN.

Sir John Trolley (with the original prologue) Mr. COLMAN.

Colonel Tivy, Mr. GRIFFITH.

Jessamy, Mr. BUNBURY.

Davy, Sir W. W. WYNN.

Mignon, WILKINSON.

Lady Minikin, Mrs. APPERLEY.

Miss Tittup, Mrs. COTES.

Gymp, Miss E. RAVENSCROFT.

To begin precisely at Seven o'Clock.

N.B. No Person to be admitted without a Ticket, which may be had of S. Sidebotham, at Wynnstay.

Those male Performers, in the foregoing Play Bills, whose names are undistinguish'd by the slight courtesy of *Mister*, were servants, or in some sort retainers, of Sir Watkin ;—for instance, —*Carter* was the Cook,—“a fellow of excellent fancy,”—and really a good low Comedian ;—this account of him, by the by, will apply equally to his publick prototype Baddeley ;—except that the latter abandon'd the kitchen before he took to the Stage ; whereas *Carter*, during the Wynnstay Entertainments, was *in utrumque paratus*.—*Salisbury* and *Wilkinson* had been accustom'd to the *boards* ;—the first (who was, then, I believe, house-steward to Sir Watkin,) had once been an Actor ; and *Wilkinson* was a Stroller at the

time, coming annually to Wynnstay, to do what he was wont to do, for the rest of the year, on his circuit,—paint scenes, and daub characters, as occasion required.—C. Sidebotham was a relation of the Butler ; and Roberts an upper domestick : —Meredith had been a Cooper, and was a bass singer of some celebrity, Sir Watkin having caused him to be instructed in musick. The vocal powers of this “ *bon Tonnelier*” were well known in certain districts of England, at Concerts, and in Cathedrals.

Four of the above-mention'd six, (Carter, Wilkinson, Salisbury, and Meredith,) however humble in worldly rank, were no mean auxiliaries to the Wynnstay Company of Amateurs.

Of the principal Performers among the Ladies and Gentlemen,—the two Misses Ravenscroft became Mrs. Vanburgh and Jenkins ;—the very pretty Miss Jones (then call'd, from the brilliancy of her eyes, *The Sparkler*) married Mr. Greaves.—These three Ladies, all natives of North Wales, are still living. Mrs. Cotes was a Courtenay ;—wife of the late John Cotes, then Member of Parliament for Wigan, and afterwards for Shropshire :—

Mr. Bunbury (whom I have already stated, in a preceding Chapter, to have been Brother to the late Sir Charles Bunbury) was for many years in the Suffolk Militia, Lieutenant-Colonel under the present Duke of Grafton, and, I believe, at last commanded it, but retired on the close of the first French War, and fix'd himself at Keswick in Cumberland, where he died. Neither his Military nor his Histrionick powers were of that description to transmit his name to posterity ;—even now the recollection of them,—and of his agreeable manners,—are fading in the minds of his surviving acquaintance ;—but his graphick talent, so conspicuous for sportive fancy in his caricatures, as well as for elegance in other specimens of his pencil, will long preserve the memory of his genius*.

Mr. Aldersey was a Barrister, and Commissioner of Bankrupts ; and afterwards a Benchet of the Temple. He continued an heir apparent

* He combined both elegance and whimsicality in a sketch which was engraved as a Ticket of Admission to the Wynnstay theatre :—

This Ticket is still in the hands of a few collectors of dramatick rarities.

till after sixty ; and then, for a short time, enjoy'd the family estate. Mr. (now Archdeacon) Nares* was then domestick Tutor to the present Sir Watkin, and his brother Mr. Charles Wynn ; —his “ Elements of Orthoëpy ” were first publish'd in 1784 ; since which his name is so familiar to the Literary world, that further designation of him would be very superfluous. Messieurs Clough, Griffith, and Apperley, were all, I believe, Gentlemen of Wales, or of Counties bordering upon the Principality. Mrs. Griffith and Mrs. Apperley were wives of the two last-mention'd gentlemen.—Here I end an account which, from its nomenclature, is in danger of too near a resemblance to some of the Chapters of Nehemiah.

Death, alas ! has made sad havock in the Cambrian Company of which I was a member !—in-somuch that the two foregoing extracts which I have given, from printed authorities in the Wynn-stay theatrical Archives, might serve almost as well for Bills of Mortality as for Bills of the Play.

Mr. Charles Wynn writes to me, in a letter upon these subjects,—“ I am afraid that, besides

* He has died since this was written.

yourself and the three Ladies whom I have mention'd*,—Miss Griffith, now Mrs. Phillips, Archdeacon Nares, and my Brother, are the only survivors of those whose names appear in the Bills for the years 1779, 1780, and 1781.”—Still further it may be remark'd, that I have reprinted only two play-bills belonging to the three years above-mention'd, and that, during that time, there were other announcements of additional dramas, including the names of persons whom I have not enumerated, and who are, also, no more.

As I am writing Records which refer so much to myself, some curious trifier may possibly wish to ask me the same question which Hamlet puts to Polonius,—“*what aid you enact?*”—I, therefore, give a list of the characters;—but I am not “so capital a calf” as to say, like King Claudius’s Lord Chamberlain, that I was “accounted a good actor.”

In my first season, being then upon my probation, and not long turn'd of sixteen, my beginnings were humble,—as *Ginks*, in the Royal

* And whom I have already noticed.

Merchant*, Paris (Mr. Oakly's french *valet-de-chambre*) in the Jealous Wife, and *Biondello*, in Katharine and Petruchio. In the two subsequent seasons I was *advanced* to the following Parts :

Guiderius, in Cymbeline ;
 Tressel, in King Richard the Third ;
 Lazarillo, in The Spanish Barber ;
 Old Woman, in Rule a Wife and Have a Wife ;
 Young Wilding in The Liar ;
 Lord Minikin in Bon Ton ;
 Young Cape, in The Author ;
 Young Clincher, in The Constant Couple : —

My father shone, among the Amateurs, “ *velut inter ignes Luna minores* ;” which might naturally have been expected from an experienced Dramatist,—Garrick's intimate,—his colleague in writing The Claudestine Marriage,—and an able Manager, long practised in drilling his Performers

* “ This Play is only an alteration by H. N. (perhaps Henry Norris, the Comedian,) from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Beggar's Bush*, and in this alter'd shape has been frequently perform'd : the scene is laid in Flanders.”

at rehearsals, and reading Plays to them in the Green-room.

Whether, in my own attempts at acting, I proved myself as my father call'd me, afterwards, in his Prologue to my first Play, "a Chip of the old Block*," I am not competent to determine ; —he, now and then, commended me; but this, in all likelihood, proceeded either from parental partiality, or his habitual encouragement to a theatrical novice.

Previously to the regular performances in each Season, we had two dress'd representations of them, which might be call'd *publick rehearsals*, to edify and astound the inferior natives,—the farmers, tradesmen, &c.—These joyous, unsophisticated folks, with their wives and daughters, were, in comparison with our more refined visitors, as the London Galleries are to the dress'd Boxes, much the most cheering Audiences to the Actors. Their applause, it must be own'd, was

* " With dulness should the Sire and Son be curst,
And dunce the second follow dunce the first,
The shallow stripling's vain attempts you'll mock,
And d—n him for a *chip of the old Block.*"

Prologue to the Musical Comedy of "Two to One."

too injudicious to be very flattering; and their expressions of delight were sometimes directly the reverse of that which might be wish'd;—as in the instance of King Richard the Third's dying speech, after his desperate struggle with Richmond,—at which they laugh'd *à gorge déployée*!

In the Cast-Book so kindly lent to me, it appears that the Wynnstay Theatricals were continued annually for nearly forty years;—from 1770 to 1808, inclusive;—but in the latter years the performances were of a much more private nature, the Spectators being confined to the Party in the House.—On one particular occasion, a Piece was acted out of the usual season, and underwent a most formidable ordeal; for the document runs thus:—

“Chrononhotonthologos perform'd October 2d, 1777.—MR. GARRICK WAS PRESENT.”

This was a year, and not quite four months, previous to Garrick's death. For raw undisciplined Actors to stand the scrutiny of the tremendous “Roscius,” it required a more than ordinary effort of nerves;—they were judicious, therefore, in selecting a Piece of such broad burlesque as puts the

exercise of keen judgment, and rigorous criticism, upon the merits of Performers, out of the question.

It was late in January, 1781, when I return'd from Wynnstay to Oxford;—whence, in the ensuing Long Vacation, while the Dog Star raged, I revisited the Deserts of London, to enjoy another Summer's suffocation, in my father's theatrical hot-house.

During this Season, the chief Hay-Market Novelties were,—I do not give them in their regular succession,—the *Dead Alive* and the *Agreeable Surprise*, two Farces, by O'Keeffe; The *Baron Kinkvervantkotsdorsprakengatchdern*, a Musical Comedy, by Miles Peter Andrews; The *Silver Tankard*, or the *Point of Portsmouth*, a Musical Farce, by Lady Craven; and the *Burlesque Ballet of Medea and Jason*.

Of these, the two first mention'd Farces succeeded as they deserved; most particularly the last,—in which Edwin's Lingo was so irresistibly comical, Mrs. Webb's Mrs. Cheshire so *broadly* effective, and Mrs. Wells's Cowslip so beautifully silly, that these supports of an eccentric Author's

excellent fun carried all before them.—This was as it should be ;—for what does this kind of Entertainment mean but pleasant absurdity ?—it pledges itself for nothing more ; yet how many fastidious coxcombs come, and condemn it, only because it is as extravagant as its very term, *Farce*, implies ?—Why won't they, in their sapience, keep away, when they are modestly forewarn'd of what they are to expect, and make room for those who love “ Laughter holding both his sides ? ”—If, indeed, the nonsense be really *dull*, down with it, at once ;—but a score of pedants,—fine, leather-headed, hissing, hyper-criticks,—dispersed through a theatre, have driven many a good *Farce*, on its first night, off the Stage.

The Musical Comedy of “ The Baron,” with a long hard german name, was taken from a Novel, of the same title, written by Lady Craven ; (afterwards Margravine of Anspach ;) was play'd during three nights of tumultuous disapprobation, and then withdrawn.

“ The Silver Tankard ” contain'd nothing palatable to the Audience ; and the second title of the Piece, “ *The Point of Portsmouth*,” threaten'd

that failure which came to pass, if only from the fair Authoress's ignorance of the spot in which she had very strangely placed her scene of action.

The Margravine frequently observed of herself, that, she “*was bred in Courts,*”—but, to portray the humours of the Point at Portsmouth, with any verisimilitude, she must have been *brought up in Alleys*;—and had she been competent to the task, the fidelity of delineation would have been offensive to delicacy.—Her “*Tankard,*” at the end of six nights, was put upon the shelf: thus, in one short summer, she suffer'd under literary disgrace, both *per alium* and *per se*;—indirectly, in the first instance, through Miles Peter Andrews, who dramatized her writing;—directly, in the second, through her own attempts at writing a Drama.

“*Medea and Jason*” was the Burlesque of a grand serious Ballet, then acting, with great applause, on the other side of the way, at the Italian Opera-House. This satirical dumb-show, which made a hit, required extraneous performers,—of whom Delpini, the popular *Clown* of his day, was the head;—as to the others, I forget them all, from head to tail:—

But one great attraction of the season was, that monstrous exhibition, *The Beggar's Opera reversed*;—this was a kind of Theatrical World turn'd upside down; in which the men and women exchanged characters :—Macheath was perform'd by the lovely Mrs. Cargill, Filch, by pretty Mrs. Wilson, Peachum by (I think) a Mrs. Lefevre, Lockit by Mrs. Webb;—Old Bannister and Edwin were the Polly and Lucy; Wikson, Mrs. Peachum; Parsons, Diana Trapes;—and so on, through the whole *dramatis personæ*. This travesty was introduced by an occasional Preludio, (as it was call'd) said to be written by George Keate*, which was sprightly enough; but some of the jokes in it are extremely gross;—the *Biographia Dramatica* quotes them, and then tells us that the subject was “very well handled, and *neatly pointed*.”—The most whimsical part of this prelude is the second scene, in a Coffee-house, which was borrow'd, if not chiefly translated, without any avowal of its obligations, from one of the *Pro-verbes Dramatiques*, call'd “*Les Fourx*.”

* For George Keate, styled F.R. and moreover A.S.S.—and also for his Preludio,—See the *Biographia Dramatica*, in their due alphabetical places.

The Manager's appetite must have been extremely keen when the "sacred hunger for gold*" induced him to bring upon the stage the indecorous catchpenny of the reversed Beggar's Opera. It may be *doubted*,—but bold is he who will be responsible for the caprices of any age, past, present, or to come,—whether the existing taste of society would tolerate, throughout the whole Play, so complete a perversion of the sexes†; or whether theatrical despotism be now so strong as to force a large body of performers into such a simultaneous transformation, since it is difficult to suppose that they were all volunteers in this nauseous entertainment. Many of the Actresses, for instance, must have been conscious of their want of symmetry, for male attire;—trousers were not, then, in fashion; nor were boots furnish'd for gentlewomen upon low salaries;—those females, therefore, who could not afford the last articles appear'd not only *en culottes*, but in silk stockings;—and, certes, among

· *quid non mortalia pectora cogis*

Auri sacra fames!

VIRGIL, *ÆNEID* 3.

† It has been tried again, once, and lately, for a Benefit at Covent Garden Theatre—and justly exploded.

the she-highwaymen belonging to Macheath's gang, thus accoutred, there were (to quote the song of Jemmy Jumps, in the Farmer,)

“ Six feet ladies,
Three feet ladies,
Small legg'd ladies,
Thick legg'd ladies ;”—

all with horse-pistols in their hands, screaming, “ let us take the road !”—a feminine phalanx which constituted, as Macheath himself says of the Judges in the Old Bailey, “ a terrible show !”—As to men, representing Jenny Diver, &c. &c. *proh pudor!*—let me drop the curtain.

In the autumn of this year, an event occur'd which produced a material revolution in my “May of Life.”

The Hay-Market Theatre had closed, the Oxford Term was approaching,—when, lo ! it pleased my father that I should keep Oxford Terms no more, nor enter London Theatres, for, at least, some seasons to come ;—in, short, he banish'd me to Scotland ; and sent me to King's College, in Old Aberdeen, escorted thither (whether under *convoy* or *custody* was somewhat

equivocal) by the Chancellor of his Hay-Market Exchequer, Mr. Jewell.

On my arrival there, I was to be turn'd over to the *surveillance* of Professor Roderick Macleod, (but not to dwell in his house,) with whom arrangements had been made, by epistolary correspondence. This was a just sentence,—or rather a well-intended parental measure, to remove me from scenes of idleness and dissipation, which not only London, but even Christ-Church, presented, to those who sought after them, and into which I had been rushing *con gusto*.

Should the reader expect me to detail the immediate causes of my enforced sojournment in the Land of Cakes, he will be disappointed. I am not sitting down, at this time of day, for the simple and tedious purpose of registering all my Wild Oats, seed by seed ;—suffice it to say, that, in scattering this kind of grain, I have seldom fail'd to reap (as in this instance of my exile) a plentiful crop of vexation ;—and, that, I think my early freaks and follies may, without any great stretch of charity, be attributed to the general “ heyday ” of youth, rather than to radical vice,

in the individual;—at least, I satisfy my own conscience in these particulars, upon calm revisal, after a completion of my thirteenth *lustrum*.

My father's Financier and I started for Aberdeen in a hack post-chaise and pair.—We left London at the fall of the leaf, when my companion's lower habiliments appear'd somewhat shivering for the season, and an excursion to northern latitudes,—consisting of *thin nankeens*, and light blue silk stockings,—a costume maintain'd by him for many years, and all the year round ; and in which I should pronounce him to have been absolutely singular, if my old acquaintance, the late Sir Thomas Stepney, had not been super-eminent for his pertinacity in the same Articles of apparel. Jewell, however, wanted both rank and resolution for further peculiarities ;—he durst not venture on the remarkable squareness of coat, nor the black pancake which represented a hat, upon the body and pericranium of Sir Thomas. As to the rest, therefore, he was clad like myself, who travell'd according to the *dandyism* of that day ; videlicet,—a frock coat with gilt buttons, and large flapping lapelles ; a cock'd hat ; powder'd hair, tied behind in a *queue*, with

curls in rollers; a frill'd and *ruffled* shirt; very tight leather breeches; and boots, worn, as Falstaff says, "like unto the sign of the leg."—I mention these trifles only to mark the fashions of the year 1781.

Certain wiseacres, of my father's councils, predicted that, when we had got about half way, I should give Jewell the slip;—but I had no such intention;—and, if I had, whither was I to go, or how escape starvation?—for, although I was to have a moderate annual allowance, at Aberdeen, to be doled out to me in quarterly dribblets, by my superintending Professor, old Rory Macleod, still the Hay-Market Treasurer was purse-bearer on the road, and I had not a *sous*.

Our first Parents had "all the world before them where to chuse," but then there was nothing to be paid for, on their journey;—whereas, in later times, horses, carriages, turnpikes, if you ride,—and even hedge ale-houses, if you go on foot,—are awkward requisites for a traveller, without a penny in his pocket.

Other motives, also, restrain'd me from playing the Man of Finance a slippery trick:—We had cultivated, during the preceding summer, a fami-

liar intercourse with each other, which arose, I think, from a little self-interest, on both parts ; but which made me look upon him rather as my kind companion than my *custos*. I had found him extremely obliging to me, in respect to those occasional *small loans* so convenient to most young Oxonians, in their visits to London ;—and *he*, probably, though no Machiavel, was politician enough to be more prone to accommodation to *me*, (for he was not so to others,) by speculating upon the chances of my becoming, sooner or later, Sovereign of the Hay-Market Theatre,—when his continuance in office would depend upon my sole will and pleasure. This event did, afterwards, occur ; and he found to the increase of his *contentation*, and to the decrease of my revenue, that his Treasurership, under the young King, was much more productive than in the reign of the old Monarch.

I would say nothing of possible worldly propensities in my departed Treasurer, to detract from the fair fame which he has left behind him ;—or else——.

This “OR ELSE” was, formerly, a phrase of important implication :—Two old Irish Kings,

whose territories touch'd, were not upon neighbourly terms. One wrote to the other,—“ Pay me the Bullocks you owe me, OR ELSE ; ”—to which *the Rival Crown'd Head* answer'd,—“ I owe you no Bullocks ; AND IF I DID ; ”—so they went to war.

We proceeded sociably ; and refresh'd merrily, notwithstanding my banishment, wherever we took up our rest for the night, on the high road to Aberdeen, by Ware, Worksop, Boroughbridge, &c. In passing through Northumberland, you obtain more than a *soupcou* of the Scottish Borders ;—but a young traveller is always agog for wonders ;—the moment, therefore, that we had cross'd the Tweed, I gaped at men, women, and children, as if they had been Oran-Outangs ; and my expectations were greatly let down on finding just the same sort of human beings, in appearance, at one end of Coldstream Bridge, as I had seen at the other.

At Edinburgh, we made a halt of three or four days, putting up at an obscure Inn, in the Old Town ;—To dilate upon the beauties of this *two-fold* City,—its buildings, both ancient and modern,—and its uncommonly romantick situation,—

would be swindling the purchasers of these volumes. Of course, we saw all the *Lions* of the place, and went to a Play.—The theatre could not then boast the best of performers;—it was in the hands of Jackson, the Actor, whose name would have been forgotten long ago, if Churchill had not, in the later editions of the *Rosciad*, transmitted to posterity the glare of his countenance, and the discord of his voice.—Of this personage the biting Bard further saith, (the lines are so pungent, I cannot help quoting them,) that,

“ When, to enforce some very tender part,
The right hand sleeps by instinct on the heart,
His soul, of every other thought bereft,
Is anxious only where to place the left ;
He sobs and pants to sooth his weeping spouse,
To sooth his weeping mother, turns and bows.
Awkward, embarrass'd, stiff, without the skill
Of moving gracefully, or standing still,
One leg, as if suspicious of his brother,
Desirous seems to run away from t'other.”

Jackson was married to a Lady who had undertaken an upper line of Acting, at Covent Garden, with little more popularity, or permanence of engagement, than her husband had before experienced at Drury Lane.

Managers, and Manageresses, are prone, if they themselves *tread the boards*, to monopolize principal characters ; it was not likely, therefore, that such a dim Hero, and Heroine, as Jackson and his Wife, while governing a theatre, could be propitious to the formation of a brilliant Company, wherewith “Auld Reeky” might be enlighten’d.

But I do not mean to assert positively that the managerial couple made a system of suppressing talent superior to their own. I only say that, whatever might have been the cause, none of the stationary principal performers in Edinburgh, during my visits there, rose much above mediocrity, and most of them fell under it.—Nor were the occasional assistants, as far as I can recollect, any better ; for instance,—Kiddy Davies, whom I have mention’d at page 19 of this volume, came down, pro tempore, from the english metropolis, as a first-rate singer,—a vocal STAR, by whose eternal absence the harmony of the London Spheres could not, in the smallest degree, have suffer’d a derangement.

I saw him figure away in Lionel, at the time of

Leith Races ; where the KIDDY did, in *performance*, rather than

“ in *language* weak,
His ardent passion tell.”

My fellow traveller Jewell had, previously to our journey, obtain'd some smattering in Edinburgh Dramaticks ; having been Treasurer there, when his old master Foote took a three years' lease of the theatre ;—Foote, however, soon grew sick of his bargain ; and sold his tenure*, short as the term of it was, to Digges and Bland. —The peculiar humour of his Pieces, and his acting, was, it seems “ *caviare*” to the North-Britons ; and, as the Audience did not relish *him*, he became disgusted with his *audience*. He vented his spleen, off the stage, in ridicule against the whole Town, and in that paltry and most illiberal kind of wit, *national reflections*.

In giving sumptuous dinners to the first society in Edinburgh, his mode of preparing for these entertainments was a strange kind of satire, by contrast, upon “ scotch economy.” Jewell told

* I think, after one Season, but of this I am not sure. The annual rent was five hundred guineas.

me, that while Foote remain'd there, he paper'd up the curls of his wig, every night before he went to bed, with the One Pound Notes of Scotland; to show his contempt for promissory paper of so little value, which was not then in English circulation; and that, when his Cook attended him, next morning, for orders,—not orders for the Play, but orders for dinner,—he unroll'd the curls on each side of his head, giving her the One Pound Notes to purchase provisions, *ad libitum*; and then sent her to market in a *sedan chair*.

Even in England, Foote was ostentatious, and vulgarly fine, before his guests. It was his custom, at his own table, as soon as the cloth was removed, to ask—"does any body drink Port?"—if the unanimous answer happen'd to be "no," he always call'd out to the servants in waiting,—"*take away the ink.*"

Jewell, who was as opposite to his old master in profusion as he was below him in intellect,—which is saying very much,—remember'd a celebrated Tavern call'd FORTUNE'S in the Old Town of Edinburgh;—"there," quoth he,—on the eve of resuming our journey towards Aberdeen,—“there we will dine to day; and see what a

number of excellent dishes we shall have, with all sorts of French wines, for nothing in comparison, *as a body may say.*”

I was a little surprised at his proposal of such a luxurious dinner, till I recollected that, in the first place, it was to be miraculously cheap ; and that, in the second,—whether cheap or not,—it would be eaten at my father’s expense.

On entering the Tavern, we were conducted into a small apartment, which was, however, large enough for a *tête à tête*. In five minutes our repast, which Jewell had previously order’d, was served up ;—Mr. Fortune, as we call’d the new existing Landlord of the old Firm, came flourishing into the room with the first dish, follow’d (for *Fortune* hath always many followers) by five Waiters. I whisper’d to my companion that all this parade threaten’d expense ;—he acknowledged that things were improved, *in style*, since he had dined in the house ; but relied firmly on the ancient regime, and the reasonable rates of a scotch market.

We had, after our soup, fish, fowl, flesh, game, *entremets*, and pastry ; all admirably cook’d, and

excellent in quality ;—but in such quantity, that the board appear'd to groan under the weight of provisions ; and I said to Jewell,

“ 'Tis not a dinner, 'tis a Hecatomb.”

Jewell had never heard of a hecatomb ;—and when I explain'd to him that it was the sacrifice of a *hundred oxen*, he observed, pettishly, (for he was sore at any fault being found with the house he had recommended,) that he did not see a bit of *beef* upon the table.—Other cattle, I told him, came to the same thing ;—he knew nothing of *discriminative definitions* ;—the *hecatomb* stuck in his throat, and he continued to grumble “ oxen,” till a glass or two of champagne had help'd him to digest the whole hundred.

Our dinner was follow'd by a dessert, and claret ;—the last article was then at so low a price, generally, in Scotland, that, after we had finish'd one bottle, Jewell manfully rang the bell for a second ; and with it order'd pen, ink, and paper :—these being placed before us, he further told the waiter to bring the Bill :—

“ And now, my dear sir,” said Jewell, “ as this is our first stop of a day or two, on the road, let

me advise you to take this opportunity of writing a penitential letter to your father ;—tell him you will *turn over a new leaf*, particularly on the *score of your extravagance* ;—depend upon't, it will shorten your banishment."

The foregoing oration is superior to the every-day style in which Mr. Jewell was wont to deliver his sentiments :—he was remarkable for that figure of speech which is denominated *slip-stop* ;—and I am much indebted to him for furnishing me (though unconsciously) with various expressions, which *I have put into the mouth of Daniel Dowlas, in my Comedy call'd "The Heir at Law."*

I differ'd from my adviser, in respect to the fitness of time, place, and circumstance, for penning a contrite epistle,—not being of opinion that sitting, at my age, over claret, and a dessert, in a tavern, after a profusion of viands, made-dishes, and champagne, was quite consistent with professions of penitence, and promises of economical reform ;—however, I buckled to the work,—sipping and dipping,—between the wine bottle and ink-bottle, alternately.

Having finish'd my letter, I look'd up ; and found that, while I had been writing, the waiter had

given Jewell the Bill;—it appear'd to be a long slip of paper, for a dinner which was to cost “ nothing in comparison, as a body may say;”—he was perusing it with his under jaw dropt, and a countenance completely proving how correct an observer our mighty Bard was of nature, when he wrote,—“ it strikes a man more dead than a *great reckoning in a little room.*”

“ Zounds !” bellow'd Jewell, “ here's a Dinner-Bill of five guineas, for two persons !”—“ And there,” said I, giving him my letter, “ is repentance for profusion, and promise of economy, for the future.”—“ Scandalous !” continued he, harping on the high charges, “ what am I to say in handing them over to your father ?”—“ Tell him,” I answer'd, “ that you will *turn over a new leaf*, particularly *on the score of your extravagance.*”—Poh ! cried he, “ that's a sneer at my good advice, to shorten your banishment.”—“ I wish with all my heart,” return'd I, “ that it could shorten the Bill.”

Instead of the good old Scottish mode of charging so much a-head for eating, the account was spun out, item by item ; and the bill was, in fact, as high as at the most expensive Tavern in London.

The Playhouse Treasurer would have made a scene of this:—had I not exerted myself to prevent him, he would have broken the bell-ropes to order up the Landlord, that he might *rail at Fortune*.—Our “dreadful reckoning” was ultimately discharged by my companion, with angry comments upon the *tempora mutantur*, violent expressions as to extortion, and a declaration, upon *oath*, that he would never enter the house again;—a threat not very formidable; as the chances were that he never would revisit it, even had things remain’d for ever in their primitive state of cheapness.—I found, many years afterwards, upon inspecting some of my deceased father’s papers, that this unlucky Bill had been whelm’d, by his Treasurer, in a sweeping article of “*Sundries at Edinburgh*.”

Next morning, we resumed our way northward, through Perth, &c. Seven miles from Edinburgh, we had to pass the Frith of Forth, at Queen’s Ferry, (about two miles across,) in a wide open vessel,—a kind of barge, at the bottom of which there happen’d to be stow’d a drove of horn’d cattle;—as it blew hard, they were not very pleasant, or safe fellow-passengers for us:—

But, in making the *trajet* with these quadrupeds, over whose backs we were sometimes in danger of being roll'd, I could not help observing to the *hiped* with me,—“ *Jewell, here's another hecatomb.*”—“This joke fail'd, as might be expected, to produce a smile from my companion ;—but he was less nettled at it than hurt :—“ Can't you see, my dear sir,” said he, in a deprecatory tone, “ can't you see how very *sensual* I am, about that confounded dinner ? ”—“ I saw you were so, yesterday,” said I.—“ I'm just as bad to day,” he return'd ; and as he really was very *sensitive* about it, (which was what he meant to express,) I abstain'd from further allusion to the occurrence.

After a day's journey of eighty-five miles from Edinburgh, we came, in the dark, to Brechin ; a place which requires not the obscurity of night to render it dismal.

Here we had a late dinner, (having eat nothing since breakfast,) of all that the *Swan*, a wretched Inn, could produce ;—it consisted of black mutton-chops, fried, greasy, and woolly ;—a complete contrast to our luxurious fare of the day before!—We were, afterwards, conducted to a dou-

ble-bedded room, (from which a decent english garret would have been refuge,) to sleep, if we could, upon mattresses very like sacks of potatoes. As the weather was cold and damp, we had order'd fire ; but the chimney, long unaccustom'd to the element, afforded so much more smoke than warmth, that the window of our chamber was kept open, to prevent suffocation.

At dawn, *we left our beds to rest ourselves* ;—and were seated, at the door of the Swan, in a rattling chaise, to pursue our rough route, before it was broad day.—Our postilion tickled my fancy, as a good specimen of phlegm in a Scotch boor. No landlord or landlady,—no waiter, male or female,—made their appearance, to “ speed the parting guest ;”—the Post-boy—the boy, by the by, seem'd to be sixty,—tuck'd us up in the chaise, then mounted his horse, and there he sat motionless, for five minutes. I bawl'd out to him, at last,—“ Why the devil don't you set off ? ”—to which he answer'd, without turning his head, or in the least altering his position,—“ *I need a dram.* ”—It was as if the equestrian Statue had spoken, in the Burlesque of Don Juan.—We waited five minutes more, when out came a raw-boned, red-hair'd wench,

with a huge bumper of scotch whiskey, which she administer'd to Sandy on horseback, who pour'd the draught through his marble jaws, without interchanging a word with Meggy ;—he then utter'd some provincial jargon to the steeds, and we quitted the Inn door, with no english crack of the whip, and bolt off at starting,—but as if we were going to a funeral.

From Brechin to Laurence Kirk ;—here we breakfasted ;—a scotch breakfast is always good ;—tea, coffee, or any beverage you please,—all kinds of bread, honey, marmalade, new laid eggs, and delicious *finnon haddocks* ;—but plague upon their *bapps*, and their mutton hams !—the first are a doughy sort of something, between a roll and a *twist* ; the last have a strong smell and taste, overpowering to acute nostrils, and delicate stomachs.

At the Boar's Head, in Laurence Kirk*, we broke our fast in the *Library* !—a small room so call'd from there being in it a glazed book-case, fill'd (easily fill'd) with books, and mounted upon

* A paltry place ; but of late years known to *snuff-takers*, from the neat wooden snuff boxes made there, and sent to London.

a bureau, after the fashion of sundry snug little back parlours, in England.—This slender collection of volumes was a kindly gift from the late Lord Gardenstone, to amuse and cheer the traveller, who baited at a lonely Inn :—An Album lay upon the table, requesting him to insert in it any extract he chose from classical authors, or anything original from himself. The reader will anticipate how this Album was abused, till it became scrawl'd over with ribaldry, like the panes of an Inn window.—I shall, probably, mention this Library again, which was much improved before I left Scotland,—indeed superseded, by a new-built room, and a considerable addition of books.

After Laurence Kirk,—Stonehaven ; or, as it is commonly call'd, Stonehive ;—a sea-port of romantick misery : here we changed horses at the “ *Mill*,” and were dragg'd, at a mill-horse pace, to Aberdeen.

For many a weary mile, from Edinburgh to my seat of banishment, the country grew more and more sterile in appearance ; till, from Stonehive to Aberdeen, it became naked desolation !—a waste of *peat*, varied only by huge masses of stone, sticking up, here and there, in the bogs,

and even in the middle of the road.—Had Ovid gone this stage, on his way to exile, how would the chicken-hearted poet have spun out his *longs and shorts*, to whimper about it, in his unmanly “*De Tristibus* !”

I expected that my eyes would be relieved when we came to the *Parks*, which they told me were within a few miles of Aberdeen ; but, on reaching them, these Parks proved to be a few *fields* of bad grass, enclosed by *stone hedges*.

We had daylight enough, after reaching the New Inn, at New Aberdeen, to have gone about the Town while dinner was dressing ;—but there came on a *scotch mist*, which, we had heard, wets Englishmen to the skin ;—so we look’d through the windows. All was dull, dull, dull !—The very gaieties of sight and sound conjured up the *blue devils*. In an open space before us, there stood a wet-through Company, belonging to a Highland Regiment of Fencibles ; these *sans-cutottes* were dolefully drawn up in the drizzling rain, ankle deep in the mud ; while the drone of a bagpipe (I forget whether it belong’d to the regimental band) kept *Maggy-Lauder-ing* and *Lochaber-no-more-ing*, enough to drive its hearers melancholy mad !

Much was to be done by us before the next evening ; for Jewell was then to set off, in the *Diligence*, on his return to London.—On the morning, therefore, immediately following our arrival, we walk'd from New to Old Aberdeen, (a march of only a mile,) that I might be consign'd to Professor Roderick Macleod.

Sent down to Scotland as a delinquent to be reform'd, I expected, of course, to be placed under a very rigid disciplinarian ; and had pictured the Professor, in my fancy, as a starch, pedantick, North Briton, the emblem of collegiate austerity.—Honest Rory was just the reverse ;—he was a square built person, of, perhaps, five feet eight, seemingly between fifty and sixty years of age, with a ruddy good humour'd countenance, and the manner and dress of a gentleman-farmer.—He shook me by the hand, and gave me a hearty welcome ; but immediately turn'd to Jewell, and own'd that he was rather sorry for my arrival ;—“for,” said he, “a young englishman breeds muckle harm to our lads frae the highlands,—he is allow'd what I may ca' a little fortune, and sets unco' bad examples of *economy*.”—He did not utter one word about college regulations and studies ; but was

anxious to settle me in comfortable apartments in the College ;—for which he told me I must wait ;—they were all with bare walls, and I must paper and furnish, before I could inhabit them ;—in the mean time, he recommended my getting a lodging with *Mrs. Lowe*, who lived in the cabin, one story high, opposite to the college gate.

It was easy to see, from the first short interview, that old Rory meant to act towards me more as my *homme d' affaires* than my tutor :—With full instructions from him, whither to proceed, we wish'd him a good morning ;—chose my apartments in the college ;—then to *Mrs. Lowe*,—hired her best room ;—thence to New Aberdeen, for an early dinner,—back again to the *Old Town*, to take possession *chez Madame Lowe* ;—and, now, the time was come for Jewell to bid me farewell, and leave me in a Land of Strangers.—We parted,—and my spirits sank.—Night arrived, and the Landlady brought me up *one* tallow candle, which she said would make me cheerful.—I look'd round the whitewash'd room ;—a truckle-bed stood in the corner of it ;—some square bits of peat smoulder'd on the pavement of the fire-place, which had no grate ;—the wind began to rise, the hail to

pelt, and the curtainless window to rattle. I thought on Mary Queen of Scots, when “the walls did but echo her moan ;”—then on Bobadil, in Cobb’s House.—I was wretched ;—and as the best remedy against wretchedness which I knew then,—or know now,—is to go to sleep as fast as you can,—I undress’d myself, turn’d down my tallow candle, for want of an extinguisher,—and crept into bed.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

“ Men bred in the Universities of Scotland cannot be expected to be often decorated with the splendours of ornamental erudition, but they obtain a mediocrity of knowledge, between learning and ignorance, not inadequate to the purpose of common life.”

JOHNSON'S TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES.

“ I would I could
Quit all offences with as clear excuse
As well as, I am doubtless, I can purge
Myself of many I am charged withall.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“ To write and read comes by nature.”

IBID.

THE episcopal City of Old Aberdeen has the appearance, says Johnson, of a Town in decay.—He might rather have said, that, it looks like a long dreary Village, in all the vigour of its original gloom ;—thinly supplied with inhabitants, and those chiefly of the poorer order.—I speak of the place as I found it, eight years after the Doctor.

There are a few comfortable houses, on a small scale ; most of which, if not all, are now occupied by persons connected with the College ;—all the

rest are mean dwellings ; some better, and many worse, than the cottage of Mrs. Lowe, which I have described in the foregoing chapter.

The slender claim to admiration which the Cathedral (judging from its remains) ever possess'd, must have been obtain'd, I think, by its tumbling down.—Ideas of pristine grandeur are too often associated with an ancient building in ruins ; and the Antiquary is in haste to extol the fragments of any old Church, which Time has crumbled, Tempests have shatter'd, or human Violence has dilapidated.—The edifice above-mention'd (commonly call'd St. Machar's) is said to have suffer'd much at the Reformation, and more after the Revolution.

As for the small College to which I was consign'd,—it stands a few yards from the road side ; yet (although it boasts to be a University in itself) may easily escape the particular notice of a traveller, posting through the *city*.

Gibson, in his additions to Camden's *Britannia*, observes, that, King's College, “ for neatness and stateliness, much exceeds the rest of the houses ; ” —and that “ one side is cover'd with slate, and the rest with lead.”—The combination of *neatness*

and *stateliness* is rather startling ;—'tis like talking of a FULL-DRESS'D QUAKER ;—but to state that *King's College* (a *University per se*) exceeds the rest of the *houses* in stateliness,—and such houses as those of Old Aberdeen,—alas !—is saying little :—But, then, one side was cover'd with slate, and the rest with lead !—“ *Prodigious !*” as *Dominie Samson* says. How such magnificence was distributed, *Gibson* does not precisely inform us ; nor do I recollect having been high-minded enough to take due note of the roofs ;—the cheaper slate, probably, was chosen in olden times, to shelter the young Students, while Lead was more appropriately lavish'd upon the grave Heads of the community.

The College was founded, in the year 1500, by Bishop Elphinston, who built the greatest part. James the Fourth of Scotland then took the patronage of it upon himself,—whence it was call'd *King's College*. *Boetius*, the celebrated Scotch Historian, was the first President there ;—his salary (which sounds ludicrously now) was Two Pounds, four shillings, and sixpence, per annum.

Of the system of education, and character of the scholars, in this College, I can give no better,

or more summary account, than I have already printed in a note to one of my former publications*. I beg leave, therefore, to make the following extract from it :—

“ There are two Towns of Aberdeen, the Old, and the New. In each of these there is a University, each University consisting of ONE *College*, and each making a very inferior appearance, in the eyes of an Oxonian, or a Cantab.—To that of the Old Town mere *boys* pour in, from the Highlands, and other parts of the country, and sojourn there for five months, annually ;—the remaining seven months being a period of uninterrupted vacation.—They occupy almost unfurnish’d rooms, with bare walls ; huddling two, three, and sometimes perhaps four, in a bed. The accommodation of my scotch servant, who had a room, and bed, *to himself*, exhibited a luxury which excited their envy. They commence with the very rudiments of Latin and Greek, proceed to Mathematicks, &c. ; and, in four years, these young gentlemen, having *begun* and *finish’d* their education, are created *Masters of Arts*, or even dubb’d *Doctors*, if they chuse, at the age, perhaps, of sixteen, or eighteen, with-

* “ *Vagaries Vindicated* ;” a Poem.

out any intermediate degree. The University of the New Town I understood to be conducted on the same principles. Let it be remember'd, I have given an account of the state of things as they were when I happen'd to see them. They may, since, have been amended ;—we live in an age of improvement,—but it is to be doubted whether the advancement of an Aberdeen University has, of late years, been rapid.*

It may be supposed that the society of such a horde of young Barbarians, migrating from their mountains, to be half-civilized, was not congenial with my inclination, or habits. They had not yet made their periodical incursion, as it wanted some days to the beginning of Term, which is on the first of November, and I should have lived, when they had effected their descent, in solitude among them, had I not very happily found two young englishmen residing in apartments belonging to the same staircase as my own. One of them was Mr. John David Perkins, afterwards a Doctor of Divinity, Vicar of Dawlish, in Devonshire, and a Chaplain to the King's Household* ; the other,

* This gentleman I conjecture to be now no more ; as his name has been discontinued in the Red Book since the year 1824.

Mr. Earle, (since dead) son of a gentleman of landed property in Yorkshire.—These two *mess'd* together ; and, on my arrival, admitted me as a partner to their table ; we thus form'd a *triumvirate Club*, dining every day, by turns, in each other's rooms.—Our dinner was prepared by the above-mention'd Mrs. Lowe, whose usual appellation was “*Lucky Lowe*,” meaning, in vulgar scotch colloquy, “*Dame*,” or “*Mother* ;” and whom we drill'd, at last, into a tolerable cook. She perform'd, indeed, her culinary functions, on my first day of joining the mess, somewhat ignorantly, by stuffing a roasted fillet of veal with plum-pudding ;—whereby she obtain'd the temporary prefix of a syllable to her title,—being call'd by us *Un-Lucky Lowe*, for a week after.

We had each hired a scotch man-servant,—an article to be procured, then and there, at an easy rate, in point of wages ;—Wine, too, was cheap ;—Port at two, and Claret at three shillings a bottle ;—both excellent ;—which is much more than could be said of the men-servants.

With such an arrangement,—our three *valets-de-chambre* in attendance, and our claret,—we sat down rather aristocratically ; except that we wanted a more spacious *Salle à manger*, and a

few silver forks, instead of our steel *three-prongers*.

In about a week or ten days, I had got out of Lucky Lowe's cabin, into my new apartments; which were exactly upon the same plan as those of my new english friends:—a small sitting-room, and a light closet to sleep in, for myself, with an adjoining room and closet, for my servant;—these were obtain'd at so inconsiderable a rate, that it did not quite amount to the annual salary of the great President Boetius.—My furniture was all second-hand, and undoubtedly not superb;—*videlicet* :—

IN SITTING-ROOM, PAPER'D YELLOW, WITH
BLUE DOTS.

One Scotch Carpet;
Four stain'd wood chairs, with cane bottoms;
Two elbow ditto, ditto;
One Walnut Dining-table;
One Mahogany Pembroke ditto;
One Looking-Glass; 2 feet high, 1 wide;
One Grate;
One Fender, ditto shovel, ditto tongs, ditto poker;
Two Diminify Window Curtains, two Venetian Blinds.

IN SLEEPING CLOSET.

One Fir Bedstead, with rough-hewn Posts ;
Blue check Curtains to ditto ;
One Mattress, ditto quilt, and two Blankets ;
One wooden stool ;
One deal board in window place, with round hole in
ditto, for wash-hand basin.

IN SERVANT'S APARTMENT.

One deal claw table ;
Two wooden stools ;
One Bedstead ;
One Mattress ;
One Blanket ;
One Rug ;
One Poker, for bars in fire-place.

All this property was reckon'd sumptuous by the Aberdeen Collegians ; and I was rather proud of it, till I sold it by "*Publick Roup**, " as they say in Scotland ; when, after paying the Auctioneer's demands for commission, and all attendant expenses, my proceeds amounted to eight pounds, nineteen shillings, and sixpence.

* *Roup* is the Scotch word for *Auction* ;—I know not whence derived.

I must not omit to mention certain chambers on the ground floor of my common stair-case, which were pointed out to me as having been very lately quitted by CHARLES BURNEY,—son of the Musical Doctor Burney,—himself, afterwards, a Doctor of Civil Law, and late Master of the celebrated School, at Greenwich.—In those chambers, he had been making his successful and laborious researches, unaided by Scotch Professors, in the language of Ancient Greece ;—here he had shut himself up, (not in Ancient Greece, but in Old Aberdeen,) for, I believe, two or three youthful years of his life ; secluding himself like a hermit*,—not living exactly upon a vegetable diet, but feeding his mind upon Greek Roots, which caused him, at last, to be reported one of the Three best Greek Scholars of his time, in England.

* The Hermit was, in fact, a *bon vivant* ; he took several frisks in the intervals of his seclusion, to Gordon Castle, whither he was invited by the late hospitable Duke of Gordon ;—and where, I was told, he occasionally tarried so long, that it was hinted to him his bed-room would soon be wanted by some other expected guest.—This could only have happen'd, (if it ever happen'd at all) through want of *tact* in a very young man ; for he was a liberal gentleman of independent spirit :—“ I knew him well, Horatio.”

Porson, Parr, and Burney, were the three thus reported; the order in which they were accounted more or less learned is just as I have given their names.—Parr was wont to say, “*Doctor Burney is the THIRD* ;” —leaving it equivocal who was the first; and certainly not ceding the point to Porson :—But who could pass judgment upon this question, it is not easy to understand :—the very sentence seems to contradict itself; for how could a *fourth* be competent to decide, unless his knowledge were as profound,—if not as that of *all the other three*,—at least, as that of *one* of them ?

The remission of discipline in King’s College, where I had dreaded the utmost severity, was extreme ;—indeed towards a young englishman there was no discipline at all. At the commencement of Term, an acute frosty-faced little Doctor Dunbar, a man of much erudition, and great good-nature, told me,—instead of saying I was placed in the Class over which he presided,—that he hoped for the pleasure of seeing me at his *lectures*.—“On what may you lecture, sir?” said I to the Doctor.—“Greek,” he answer’d, “and

Mathemaaticks.”—I declared Mathematicks to be my utter aversion, and that I never could endure them at Oxford. “Hoot ! hoot !” said the little Doctor, “gin ye come aince to my *lecture*, ye’ll find me mak’ *mathemaaticks* sac entertaining, that ye’ll nae be able to keep awa’.” I did attend this worthy man, for a few mornings, (when he address’d himself pointedly to *me*, in preference to all the other students,)—and, then, I totally deserted him.

He afterwards invited me to breakfast with him, when he mildly ask’d me why I had absented myself from his Class ;—I said, carelessly, in reference to his promise of entertainment, that *he had not kept his word with me*.

The complacent smile with which this very impudent speech was received, and the complete toleration of my insubordinate conduct, (for which I should have been expell’d at Christ-Church,) sufficiently show how much my father had been misinform’d when he sent me to King’s College as to an academical Penitentiary :—its doleful location, however, was in itself a punishment ; my sense of which I always express’d to

him, in my letters, by three large Notes of Admiration, after the date of place,—as thus :

“ ABERDEEN !!! ”

In respect to Professor Roderick Macleod, as my quarterly allowance came through his hands, I visited him frequently ; not only to receive my payments, but sometimes to procure an advance, and sometimes, soon after my arrival in Scotland, to consult him upon matters of expenditure,—chiefly the purchase of apparel ; in which he always was ready to be my Agent, and chuckled when he heard I had nick-named him the “ *Professor of Economy.* ”

However irreverent this appellation from pupil towards tutor, certain it is, that honest Rory never dreamt of teaching me anything but how to live within my income ;—a science for which I had no more genius than for mathematicks ;—and I fail'd as much in observing his darling maxim of “ a baubee saved is a baubee got,” as in surmounting Euclid's problem call'd the Pons Asininus. But Rory was not, in fact, pure in his *elements*,—he confounded shabbiness with thrift, —and was for sacrificing comfort and cleanliness to frug lity. He advised me, for instance, (and

advised in vain,) to wear linen coarse enough to rub off my skin, and to change it only twice, or, at the utmost, three times a week. In opposition to this system, I appeal'd so strongly to his gentlemanly pride, or shame, that he actually admitted it would be better if those parts of a shirt which are *most exposed to view* consisted of *finer materials than the rest*.

There is no accounting for the inconsistencies of mankind !—Who could imagine that old Rory Macleod, in the teeth of all his habits and *professions*, and on the verge of three score, would have fallen into the extravagance of taking to his parsimonious bosom a young Wife ?—Yet so it happen'd ;—yea, happen'd while he had three lads under his care, (myself, and my young friends Perkins and Earle,) to keep his doctrines alive in his mind, by giving him most abundant occasion for the exercise of his economical precepts :—and, then, there were “ rings, and things, and rich array,” to be purchased for the bonny bride ;—The Sacrist of the College Chapel, who liquor'd his boots, rubb'd down his highland pony, and thrash'd his walnut tree, was to be superseded by a Gawky in a green jacket, and a red cape, who smear'd whatever he

touch'd, and broke a world of glass and crockery;—in addition to Mause, who had, for five and twenty years, made her master's bed, and his barley-broth, and had been his maid of all work, a *femme de chambre* was to be hired, to wait on young Mrs. Professor Macleod;—then the house must be new painted, and (worst rub of all!) partly new furnish'd;—the Bridegroom's wardrobe, too, (besides a new suit for the wedding,) was to undergo a thorough scouring, that he might look gallant and gay, at least during the honey-moon.

I say nothing of the laugh among his neighbours, which was all *at his expense*.

On the day preceding the nuptials, some wag (a rare commodity in that part of the world) sent him the following three lines from Chaucer's January and May;—

“Aviseth you, ye ben a man of age,
How that ye entren into mariage,
And namely with a young wif and a faire.”

But he defied squibs;—he had anticipated the gossips' talk, and said it would only be “a nine days' wonder:”—yet, in such a retired nook as Old Aberdeen, where population is scanty, and food

gallant gentlemen were in the Highland Costume, which disdains a part of male dress indispensable in every society to which I had previously been accustom'd.—The object of this meeting was soon declared to me by the Lord Provost, who drank my health, and presented me with the Freedom of the City.—My countrymen, Messrs. Earle and Perkins, who had arrived in Scotland several months before me, had already experienced this civick courtesy.—Bestowing upon three such raw subjects the same honour which had been conferr'd upon the celebrated Johnson, as a tribute to his learning, genius, and morality*, can only be consider'd as an intended compliment to the English in general; it could not possibly have arisen from respect for any meritorious qualities in the youthful individuals.

The adoption of so remarkable a Uniform as that

* “ On Monday we were invited to the Town-Hall, where I had the freedom of the city given me by the Lord Provost. The honour conferr'd had all the decorations that politeness could add, and what I am afraid I should not have had to say of any city south of the Tweed, I found no petty Officer bowing for a fee. The parchment containing the record of admission is, with the seal appending, fasten'd to a riband, and worn for one day by the new citizen in his hat.”

which I have described, by three english students in a Scotch College, procured for us more notoriety than reputation; and our frequent tavern dinners in the New Town, while at a dead weekly expense for Lucky Lowe's cookery in our rooms, had the same tendency:—on our return homewards, too, from those dinners, we had been several times annoy'd by a party of Choice Spirits, who paraded the streets at nights, upon principles more liberal than those of the Patrol;—for, instead of receiving pay, as a half efficient guard to the timorous passenger, they generally quieted all his fears at once, without fee or reward, by knocking him down, and leaving him senseless on the ground.

This knot of ruffians, who had become a nocturnal terror, like the Mohocks whom we read of, in the Spectator, we were determined to chastise, and, if we could, entirely suppress;—for this purpose, we often march'd from our College at midnight, and proceeded to the New Town, attended by our servants, (thus making six in number,) all arm'd with bludgeons, to retaliate upon our aggressors.

This act of ultra-justice, which increased the disturbances it pretended to put down, brought

us into still further disrepute ;—and, I know not how it was,—whether from making more bluster, or having more animal spirits than my companions,—but so it happen'd, that I was always consider'd the ringleader in these quixotical sallies ; insomuch that I became pointed at by the lower order of Aberdeenites, who distinguish'd me by the appellation of the “ *Muckle De'il*,”—Anglicé the *Great Devil*.

Vulgars (and, too often, their betters) look at every thing on the scandalous side ; and, therefore, my youthful follies were exaggerated, by the plebeians, into *abominations*. The respectable part of the Town's-people, to some of whom I had brought letters of recommendation, were more charitable in their opinion of me ;—in fact, they seem'd to think me only a *pickle* ; which was the worst they could fairly call me ;—and so they might have call'd more than half the lads of my own age, who had been my school-fellows at Westminster.

I had forgotten an incident which occur'd, during my stay in the North, 'till I was reminded of it, about three years ago, by Lord Lauderdale, who ask'd me whether the story told of me, in his Lordship's native land, were true ;—the tale runs thus, and I acknowledge its veracity :—

Some practical wags had been extremely smart. one night, upon a house in the suburbs of Old and New Aberdeen, by throwing stones against its windows ; and were so successful in cracking their jokes, that not a pane of glass remain'd unbroken ; —after which they stole away. These pelting geniuses opined that their work, like that of the mighty Junius*, (who pelted as hard as anybody,) had made a deal of noise, and donè a deal of mischief ; and that, like him also, they had better remain incognito, to avoid responsibilities.

The delinquents having escaped detection, this outrage was immediately attributed to *me* !—I was the *Muckle De'il* by popular acclaim ; and every unown'd offence was consider'd to be mine, as duly as all waifs and strays belong to the Lord of the Manor.

Accordingly, Lucky Walker, who tenanted the damaged house, “enter'd her action” against me. Indignant at so unfounded a charge, I determined to repel it ;—so I hied me to an Attorney.

Now the house in question, being insulated, and standing snugly midway between the two Towns, had a patch of ground behind it, stock'd

* Author of the *Anonymous Letters*.

with as many fruits and flowers as an ungrateful soil would permit ; and thither all who were willing to pay resorted, in the summer, to pluck roses, and pick berries* : but there was a whisper (just such a whisper as a side speech upon the Stage, which every body hears,) that, however pretty the garden might be, frequenters of the *house* were not attracted to it by its *out-of-door* beauties.

In short, the fame of Lucky Walker's premises was somewhat worse than equivocal,—which was a rare thing in that part of the world ;—and what was much rarer, in that or any other part of the world, the attorney on whom I stumbled was anxious to prevent litigation.

Having explain'd my case to the Man of Law, he advised me to compromise the matter, and by no means to let it go to a trial ; observing, that however innocent I might be, still it was disgraceful to be brought into a Court of Justice for breaking windows,—and moreover the windows of such a house ;—the Landlady of which, and her unprincipled lodgers, were capable of swearing anything

* The Scotch comprise strawberries, and raspberries, and, I believe, all other fruits of the berry tribe, in this general denomination.

against me ;—they might even exaggerate the occurrence into an attempt at burglary.—“And then, sir,” I ask’d, “what would be the consequence?”—“Gude troth, young gentleman,” he answer’d, “ye might e’en be *baanish’d*.”—“What !” said I, starting up,—“banish’d !—from Scotland to England !—my dear sir ! I am delighted to hear it ;—I hope your are quite correct in your opinion ;—my father has already banish’d me from London to Aberdeen,—only get me *banish’d back again*, from Aberdeen to London, and I shall look upon you as the Prince of all Attorneys !”

This was no compliment to the Lawyer’s Country,—but he was a liberal man, with some humour, and was not offended with my *naïveté* ;—he leant back in his chair, look’d at me a little while in astonishment, and then burst into a fit of laughter.

Resuming his gravity, he told me that, if these were my instructions to him, he would have nothing to do with my cause ;—that it was against his sentiment to return me upon my father’s hands,—and particularly by the process which I had proposed.

I press'd him, in vain, to recommend me to some professional gentleman less sentimental than himself; and, shortly afterwards, the real offenders were by some accident discover'd,—which put an end to all hope of shortening my exile, by getting myself transported!

There is no defending my contempt of the world's censure, or praise, in this wanton endeavour to criminate myself, while I knew I was innocent;—but reader,—if thou be'st a charitable reader,—thou wilt admit my (then) youth, inexperience, and giddiness of nature, as palliatives:—yet “men's evil manners live in brass;”—and, had I accomplish'd my desire, it is likely that the scandal of having been *banish'd from Scotland* would have stuck to me at this day, when all the extenuating particulars belonging to the fact were forgotten.

Idleness, says the Copy-Book, is the root of all evil;—it certainly caused many of my indiscretions in these northern latitudes;—which, again, caused the fathering upon me of all foundling misdemeanours:—But, previously to the above occurrence, (which, by the by, has been told out of its place,) I had voluntarily

checker'd my uncontroll'd frolics by something like intellectual pursuit: for I soon discover'd that a mere Aberdeen Lounger has no resources to while away his time; and that he cannot, like our Town Butterflies, be occupied, week after week, in doing a deal of nothing.—The London *Exquisite* can ring a vast variety of changes;—but there is a miserable sameness in the little chime of a Trifler at Aberdeen. -

Three months of my sojournment were not over, when the morning walk, southward, to loiter in the New Town, or northward, to look over the Brig of Don*, grew wearisome in the extreme;—this routine, therefore, was occasionally broken by excursions on horseback, (in company with my two brother englishmen,) when none but boys could find pleasure in galloping over a scotch road, in a scotch winter.

* “Over the river Don is a bridge only of a single arch, sustain'd on each side by a rock, and is a most noble and surprising piece of workmanship.”

“The bridge at Old Aberdeen, over the Don,” [it is a little way out of the town] “consists of one immense arch of stone, sprung from two rocks, one on each side, which serve as a buttment to the arch; so that it may be said to have a foundation coeval with nature, and which will last as long.”

TOUR THROUGH GREAT BRITAIN.

In one of these rides, or rather *slides*, (for it was at the end of January, and the high-ways were one sheet of ice,) we put up, for the night, at Laurence-Kirk, which I have already mention'd, in my route from London.—Here the *Album* lay upon the table, inviting us to write,—therein, also, did the wretched prose and verse of many a previous traveller encourage me to scribble,—and therein did I deposit, upon a profaned altar, in a scottish Inn, my *virgin offering to the Muse*.

This maiden effort (a ballad) was a contemptible piece of doggerel,—and, what is much worse, an attempt to ridicule the hospitable nation which (always excepting the *mob* of Aberdeen) had shown me kindness ;—a nation for which I have, now, a very great respect ;—but a minor wag (as I was, then, in *every* sense of the word,) sacrifices everything for what he thinks a joke*.

Bad, however, as my verses were, even one of the country which they libell'd had good-nature and generosity enough, in the midst of his indignation, to bestow upon them a kind of praise ;

* I have express'd my present sentiments upon *national reflections*, in the chapter immediately preceding—See page 69 of this volume.

for, on a subsequent visit to Laurence-Kirk, I found, under my lines, the following Distich, evidently written by a North Briton :—

“ I like thy wit;—but, could I see thy face,
I’d claw it well, for Scotia’s vile disgrace.”

to which I subjoin’d,—

“ Is, then, a Scotchman such a clawing elf?—
I thought he scratch’d no creature but himself !”

My disposition to scribbling would have shown itself, I suppose, at all events, sooner or later ;—but the Album, coming thus early in my way, acted as a hot-bed upon my inert propensities, which, once roused into life, continued to germinate ;—consequently my earliest productions were premature, and, like forced asparagus, excessively weak.

Finding that I could tag rhymes, (of which I was not quite sure ’till I had tried,) I sat down, immediately on my return from Laurence-Kirk, to write a Poem ;—but I had the same want as a great genius, not, then, I believe, born, and since dead,—I *wanted a Hero** :—the first at hand,—

* See the first Stanza of Lord Byron’s “ Don Juan.”

I found him in the last newspaper, lying on my table, which had arrived from London,—was the renown'd Orator and Statesman, CHARLES FOX,—who was then term'd, in all Whig publications, “*The Man of the People.*”

I, accordingly, gave the same title to my Poem ; knowing little more of Politicks, and the Man of the People, than of the Man in the Moon !—In one particular of my work, I follow'd the example of a Poet whose style was *somewhat different* from my own ;—I allude to one JOHN MILTON.

Milton has, in most people's opinion, taken Satan for the Hero of his *Paradise Lost* ; I therefore, made *my* hero, as diabolical as need be,—blackening the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, till I had made him (only in his politics remember) as black as the Devil himself ;—and, to mend the matter, I praised to the skies Lord North, who had lost us America !

This notable effusion I publish'd, (but suppress'd my name,) at Aberdeen*, in a small Edition, “for the Author,”—the Bookseller there (I believe the only one in the Town) wisely declin-

* Some short prefatory matter to the poem was dated *Bamff*,—a town thirty miles, and upwards, north-west of Aberdeen.

ing to purchase the copyright;—of course, he only sold the work by commission, leaving me responsible for the expense of printing.

A new Poem publish'd in this corner of the kingdom was an extraordinary event, and excited some curiosity there. It was thought to contain some smart lines, and was in every body's hands; but, alas! not at all to the author's profit;—the Aberdeenites were in general like Rory Macleod, great economists;—the prodigal few who had bought my production lent it to their frugal neighbours; who lent it again to others, and the others to others, *ad infinitum*;—so that about one hundred copies were thumb'd through the town, while all the rest remain'd clean and uncut upon the shelf of the bibliopolist. He sent me his account, some time afterwards, enclosing the Printer's Bill,—by which it appear'd that I was several pounds debtor, for the publication;—but, then, I became sole Proprietor of all the unsold copies, which were return'd to me;—all of which I put into the fire,—save *one*, which happen'd to turn up a few years ago, in looking over old papers;—I found it to be downright school-boy trash, and consign'd it to the fate of

its predecessors.—I hope that there is now no trace of this puerile stuff extant.

Although the accident of scrawling a song in the Laurence-Kirk Album imperceptibly led me to the Press as a versifier, still the Twig had been bent in a dramatick direction; and the young Tree was mainly inclined to the Stage*. My poem, therefore, had scarcely appear'd in print, when I had finish'd a Musical Farce, which I entitled "*The Female Dramatist*," and transmitted to my father:—

It puzzled the managerial Papa;—he thought it had some promise; but that it was too crude to risk, as regularly accepted by the theatre:—so it was brought out, *anonymously*, on the Benefit-Night of Jewell, the Treasurer.

Little is expected from novelties produced at a Benefit;—and, considering the apathy with which they are usually received, I may without vanity state, that, this Farce was noticed in a very conspicuous manner,—for it was *uncommonly hiss'd*, in the course of its performance. The Audience, I was told, laugh'd a good deal in various parts of

* "Just as the Twig is bent, the Tree 's inclined."

the Piece ; but there were passages in it to excite disapprobation ; and much *too broad* to have escaped the erasing hand of the Examiner of Plays, in the present day.

On perusing the manuscript after a long lapse of time, I threw the “Female Dramatist” into the flames, as a fit companion for the “Man of the People ;”—and, if this Consumed Couple had belong’d to any Author but myself, he would not, perhaps, have had the folly, or candour, (or whatever else it may call’d,) to rake up their ashes*.

Undismay’d by these failures,—such is the *cacoëthes scribendi* !—I proceeded, not long afterwards, from a two-act farce to a three-act comedy. —This last was entitled “*Two to One*,”—the first of my publicly *avow’d* dramas ;—it was sent to Town early in 1783, two-thirds of it having been finish’d on the preceding Christmas. Hence

* “THE FEMALE DRAMATIST, Musical Farce [Mr. Egerton says by Mrs. Gardner] Acted at the Haymarket, for a benefit, August 16, 1782. Not printed. The principal character was borrow’d from Mrs. Metaphor, in *Roderick Random*.—We have heard this piece ascribed to Mr. Colman, junior.”

BIOG. DRAM.

The above work, in its list of Dramatick Writers, positively gives the Farce to Mrs. Gardner.

it will appear to the reader, should he think it worth while to recur to dates, in the matters which *I have related, that I was guilty of a Poem, a Farce, and a Play, (such as they were,) in the course of twelve months ;—the two first crimes having been committed in my twentieth year, and the third nearly accomplish'd before I had enter'd my twenty-first.*

“*Two to One*” was immediately accepted by my Sire, for his ensuing season, in the Hay-Market ; but, by some accident, not perform'd 'till the season afterwards ; when I had return'd to Town, and witness'd its first representation ;—its success was very flattering, and the play had a *run*.—I shall mention it again, in its due place ;—but don't be frighten'd,—I shall not say much.

During all this scribbling, the devil must be in it if I had much leisure for getting into scrapes, and for breaking the peace, and the windows, of the Aberdeenites ;—especially as I had taken a fancy not only to write but to *read* :—

King's College boasts a very good Library, to which I was allow'd free access ; and was most liberally permitted to take books from it, into my own apartments, upon the promise of returning them

undamaged, in a reasonable time. Availing myself of this privilege, I pored over many volumes,—*labour'd at Latin and Greek,—and hammer'd* at Classics whom I fear'd, at first, I should never understand. But here I discover'd that, however idly a boy may have rubb'd through a publick school, he leaves it with more rudimental knowledge sticking to him than he is aware of;—and without this, I could not have enter'd upon the course of private reading which I had undertaken;—it is impossible for a solitary adventurer to navigate the dead sea of languages, unprovided with the rudder and compass of syntax and grammar.

By devoting two or three hours, every day, to such literary pursuit, during the chief part of my stay in Scotland, and by continuing the same practice, for some years afterwards, in London, I more than made up my time lost at Westminster, and Oxford;—and, on comparing the extreme indolence of my earlier days with my subsequent industry, it looks as if I had gone to those last mention'd Seats of Erudition not to learn what they profess to teach, but to learn just as much as might enable me to teach myself.

In later life, I have read, as I believe most edu-

cated gentlemen read, who do not pretend to profound scholarship ;—more for amusement than study ;—by snatches, as inclination may prompt, or as accident may bring old or new works in my way ;—and turning to books, generally, for occasional reference, rather than continuous perusal.

In regard to my incipient attempts at dramatick composition, I had the critical advice of my *Fencing-Master*!—As there was something eccentric in this person's Life,—and something very terrible in his Death,—I shall say no more of him in this chapter, but open with him in the next.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

“ Those villains will make the word Captain as odious as the word occupy ; which was an excellent good word before it was ill sorted : therefore Captains had need look to it.”

SHAKSPEARE.

—— — “ What a wild Journey
Have I more wildly undertaken !—
How without counsel, care, reason, or fear !

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

—— “ Multum et terris jactatus et alto.”

VIRGIL.

CAPTAIN JOHN LEE,—whose title adhered to him (or he to the title) by virtue of the vulgar saying, “ Once a Captain, and always a Captain,” —was introduced to me, on my arrival at Aberdeen, as a Teacher of Fencing and Flute-Playing ; two arts which appear to be incompatible with each other ; as one is conducive to your keeping the breath in your own body, and the other to blowing it out. I closed with the Captain’s offers in his first capacity, and declined them in the second ; being desirous that my lungs should

be neither perforated by a steel weapon, nor impair'd by a wind instrument.

He added a third proposition,—namely, that we should read French together ;—to this I immediately acceded ; and as we were much upon a par in our knowledge of the language, it was a mutual advantage,—except that I paid for exercising french upon him, while he practised upon me *gratis*.

At our first interview, I was particularly struck with his gentlemanly address. He appear'd to be about fifty, and might have been younger,—for when Intemperance has form'd a coalition with Time, (which had happen'd in the present instance,) it is difficult to give an accurate guess at the age of an elderly gentleman. He was somewhat above six feet high, graceful in deportment, and rather industrious to maintain the erectness of his figure, and the firmness of his gait ;—broad in shoulders, ample in chest, without corpulence ;—but with legs much too taper to be efficient props of so grand a superstructure.

On the whole, his natural advantages much exceeded their accidental drawbacks ; and his conversation was so superior, that, the moment you began to talk with him, you forgot that both

his person and apparel were considerably the worse for wear.

LEE had enter'd the Army under the auspices of his father, who was a Field Officer, and had given him a very good education, with a view to the Military profession. He had risen to a Company, when he was order'd on Service, to one of our West India Islands;—from which he decamp'd with the wife of his friend, and patron, the Colonel of his Regiment.—So gross a dereliction of moral and military duties, disgraced him as a Man, and broke him as a Soldier.—On reaching England with the Lady, they soon exemplified the proverb about Poverty and Love.—The Captain, indeed, did not, like Love, fly out at a window of the house where they had taken up their abode; nor, like Poverty, walk in at the door;—but he walk'd *out* at it;—leaving *Madame la Colonelle*, with “her fair side all unguarded,” and turn'd Strolling Actor. Let me not, however, exaggerate this matter;—I do not mean to say that, instead of staying to starve with her, he abandon'd her to starve by herself;—I only state that they parted,—I know not on what terms, or in what temper.

Although a Stage Hero, he never rose, I believe, to eminence, nor appear'd on the London Boards ;—he, nevertheless, form'd an intimate acquaintance with an Actress in the Metropolis, of no great talent, and now totally forgotten.—With this lady, he came to Aberdeen ; where, their histories being unknown, except to one or two confidential friends, they resided as man and wife ; living for some time in decent comfort and repute ; Lee picking up a pittance by means of his foil, his french, and his flute ; while his helpmate, who was a worthy and industrious woman, contributed to their scanty income, by keeping a day-school for children. .

But the Captain cared much less for his daily bread than for his daily bottle ;—and was in the habit of making such draughts upon the little treasury at home, to supply himself with draughts out of doors, that poor Mrs. Lee was often left dinnerless ; while her profligate and unfeeling husband was “carousing ~~to~~ bottle deep,” at a tavern :—of this I was not aware till several months after I became acquainted with him.

As to the depth of the gallant Captain's morals, my english friends and I only look'd at the surface

of his behaviour, while in our company ;—how he might conduct himself out of it, we cared little, and thought less.—In London, where a *roué* is pointed out to heedless lads, we should have *cut* him ; but old Rory Macleod never pointed out any thing to us but economy ;—and Lee's gaiety and humour were so pleasant,—indeed fascinating to juveniles,—that we generally made him stay to dine with us when he came from the New Town to the Old, to give us a morning's lesson in fencing ; which was about twice a week.

At the commencement of my scribbling pursuits, I used to impart my crudities to Lee, and ask his advice upon them ;—the first he ever gave me was rather unfortunate, as he persuaded me to print the Poem mention'd in my last chapter, whereby I was sundry pounds out of pocket. In my first attempt at Farce, he was of more service ; for besides his natural judgment, taste, and turn for drollery, he had acquired some knowledge (by acting in provincial Companies) of stage dialogue and effect, which made him a tolerable counsellor, *faute de mieux*, to a Tiro in dramatick composition.

Our intercourse was not of long continuance :—

The death of his putative wife, who had been for some time declining in health, happen'd about a year after my first acquaintance with him; and it was said, (I fear, with truth,) that her distress, both in mind and person, in consequence of his neglect, and the difficulties arising from his improvidence, hasten'd her dissolution;—in short, he was supposed to have broken her heart. Slight as her controul over him had been, still, while there was a home, and a Mrs. Lee, he had some little respect for appearances, and some dread of the world's censure. Indeed, without this, he could not have retain'd,—particularly among the inhabitants of a scotch town,—any of his pupils;—several of whom only continued to take lessons of him from compassion for the unhappy woman whose fortunes were involved with his own, and whose sense of her domestick duties, in the midst of sickness, penury, and his ill-treatment of her, kept his person in decent trim, and often saved him from the want of a clean shirt, when he wanted a guinea.

On her demise, he almost immediately threw off all semblance of decorum;—becoming a downright sot, and sloven;—appearing, in the broad

sunshine of a summer evening, dirty and drunk, and staggering from pot-house to pot-house. Conduct so notorious, and disgusting, could not escape the notice even of the careless english triumvirate in King's College,—and we admitted him no more, either as our guest, or our instructor.

One morning, while I was sitting with my friend Earle, a Bill was presented to him for payment of the small sum of Five Pounds.—The drawer “ John Lee,” the acceptor “ William Earle ;”—when the said William Earle did immediately declare, that the acceptance was a very bad imitation of his hand-writing.—Feeling that this speech was throwing a rope round the neck of the gallant Captain, I started up, saying,—“ No, no, my dear Earle, you must be mistaken ; we have had various dealings with Lee, and, in the number of them, you have forgotten this trifling transaction :”—then, turning quickly to the presenter of the Bill,—the journeyman of a shop-keeper, with whom both Earle and I had dealings, —I begg'd him to return with it to his master, on whom we should call in a few hours, to settle the business to his satisfaction ;—in the mean time, I

caution'd the man against saying a syllable about this *mistake* to anybody but his principal ;—he quitted us with a bow,—and a *smile*, which convinced me he would chatter.

Five minutes after the man had left us, on his return to the New Town, we took the same road, to hunt out Lee, and found him in one of his haunts,—an obscure tavern, where he was dining, at an early hour, with a very low set.—We sent in our names, requesting to see him immediately, on particular business ;—and while we waited for him in a mean parlour,—which was apparently, from its sanded floor, its furniture, and smell of tobacco, the smoking-room of the *gemmen* who frequented the house,—I entreated Earle to moderate his wrath, and suffer me to be spokesman ;—for he talk'd violently about the infamy of the transaction, publick justice, &c.—and was for hanging our late friend and fencing-master, off-hand.

On the Captain's entrance, I calmly told him of the Bill of Exchange which had just been presented for payment ; adding,—I sincerely hoped that *both* the names attach'd to it were forged, and that he was innocent.—He had come to us

flush'd from table ;—but, at first mention of the Bill, he turn'd as pale as ashes ;—recovering himself, however, almost immediately, he said in a firm tone, and collected manner,—“ Gentlemen, I have left a party, in the middle of dinner, to attend you ;—do me the honour to call here again, in an hour.”

Earle whisper'd something about sending for a Constable, but I recommended all possible indulgence :—the hour requested was, therefore, granted, and at the expiration of it we return'd.

In the intermediate time, I heartily hoped, to say the truth, that Lee would take the opportunity of absconding ; but he stood his ground ;—and, at our second interview, seem'd struggling to maintain the steadiness of his nerves. He first address'd Mr. Earle :—“ Sir,” said he, “ *distress* has driven me to the act which I have committed ;”—then, falling on his knees, and clasping his hands together, he exclaim'd,—“ Young gentlemen, think on our past intercourse, and our social days ;—my Life is in your hands ;—for God's sake spare me ! !”—While he utter'd this, the glare of his eyes, and the convulsive quiver upon his lips, were frightful.

A gigantick man of fifty,—a gentleman of good family and acquirements,—humbling himself at the feet of two boys,—acknowledging his infamy, and imploring them to save him from an ignominious death,—is so shocking a picture, that it requires no height of colouring :—

How the two boys were soften'd by it, need scarcely be told ;—how far felony was compounded by promising Lee that the Bill should be taken up (as it was, by Mr. Earle,) immediately, let the Lawyers determine ;—how far Justice should be season'd with Mercy, Shakspeare, above all others, has enforced, in his beautiful lines upon this subject*.

Finding that the Bill would be paid and cancell'd, Lee's gratitude was almost as painful a sight as his terror and despair ;—encouraged by the lenity shown him, and in the flurry of his mind, he express'd a hope that he might again be received at King's College, and countenanced by us, as before. The bad taste (if not impudence) of this speech provoked us to remind him, that we were not making up a misunderstanding with him

* “ The quality of Mercy is not strain'd,” &c.

Merchant of Venice, Act 4, Scene 1.

as our former friend, but preventing his being taken into custody as a felon ; and that he had better quit the town immediately.

Next morning we learn'd that the transaction had transpired ; for the shop-keeper's journeyman, as I foretold, had not been silent in respect to his suspicions ;—but the Bill had been taken out of his master's hands, by Mr Earle, on the previous night, and the Captain had begun his forced march from Aberdeen, at day-break.—That Lec should have stay'd till the note became due, when detection was almost inevitable, can only be accounted for by that fatuity which sometimes marks the conduct of desperate men, and the continual state of intoxication in which he had latterly lived.

“ Master Lec,” said I to my friend Earle, “ has had a salutary warning ; it has cured him, I think, of one *little foible*, out of many ;”—but, alas ! I spoke too confidently, in a case which verified the proverb, that, “ *hanging goes by destiny.*”

It was rather more than a year after this incident, (which I had then almost forgotten,) that I return'd home to Soho Square, towards the end

of January, 1784 ; when I learn'd that the persevering Captain had been at his handiwork again, and had just been found guilty, at the Old Bailey. —As the following account is not long, was printed rather more than forty-five years ago, and may, therefore, be new to the majority of my readers, I extract it from the Chronicle of the Annual Register.

17 Janry. } “ John Lee was indicted for forging
1784. } an order for payment of money, which order ran
in the following words :—‘ Nov. 24, 1783. Pay to
Mr. John Lee, or order, upon demand, the sum
of fifteen pounds sterling, which place to the ac-
count of Office.

.	Townsend,
Pay Office,	M. G.
Ordnance Office,	
Whitehall.’	

“ There were eight counts in the above indictment ; one with forging it, to defraud Lord Townsend, the Master General ; the second uttering it, knowing it to be forged, &c., and varying it as it pass'd different hands.

“ Mr. James Cusden, who keeps the Rose Coffee-

house, in Brydges Street, Covent Garden, deposed, that, in December last, the prisoner came to his house, and drank two bottles of wine; that soon after a third gentleman came in, and they had a third bottle*, when the prisoner sent for Mr. Cusden, who came up stairs, and the prisoner produced the above bill, wishing to get five guineas upon it; but Mr. Cusden only advanced him one guinea and a half. When he presented the note to Messrs. Cox, &c. Agents at Charing Cross, the forgery was discover'd, and the prisoner apprehended.

“ Mr. Cox proved it was not Lord Townsend's hand-writing, and Mr. Pinder produced the bill.

“ The evidence for the prosecution rested here.

“ On the cross-examination it was urged by Mr. Sylvester, counsel for the prisoner, that the indictment did not correspond with the bill, for it stated M. G. to be Master General, which the prosecutor had no right so to construct; that there was no such office at Whitehall as the Pay-Office;

* It does not appear in this account who was (or that there was any) *second* gentleman, to assist in drinking the *two first bottles*; and it is fair to suppose, from Lee's habits, that he finish'd them by himself, before the entrance of the gentleman with whom he had the *third* bottle.

that it could not be to defraud Lord Townsend, as Lord Townsend was not then in office, and consequently not Master General of the Ordnance. These, and several other legal objections, were stated by the counsel, but over-ruled; as Judge Heath was of opinion, that they were not averments, but stated in the indictment to be purports. The evidence being summ'd up, the Jury found the prisoner guilty of uttering the Bill, knowing it to be forged. The case, however, is referr'd to the Twelve Judges, on a number of exceptions stated in the indictment."

I have look'd, in vain, for a further account of "John Lee," in the Annual Register; but that the Twelve Judges were not favourable to him is evident; from "The Last Dying Speech and Confession of the famous Captain Lee, who was executed, this morning, at Newgate," being bawl'd about the streets, not long after my arrival in London.

Such was the disgraceful death of a man gifted by nature, polish'd by education, accomplish'd in vice;—and whose name may serve with those of some other Heroes, both in and out of the Newgate Calendar,

"To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

Among the great variety of my acquaintance, the late Captain Lee is, to the best of my recollection, the only *executed gentleman* with whom I ever had the honour to be intimate :—and, if I mention his wretched fate with levity, it is because I *now* contemplate his memory as undeserving of pity.—He had sunk in the scale of heartless depravity very many degrees below certain men who have been known and tolerated in the world, as *agreeable profligates**.

But I have hurried up to London a full year before my time. I must return to Old Aberdeen, to notice some particulars, previously to my final departure from Scotland.

By the by, of Aberdeen,—I doubt whether Doctor Johnson be right in his conjecture, when he supposes that the Old and New Towns are govern'd by the same Magistrates. At all events, during my residence in King's College, there was a very worthy old gentleman, living in the Old Town, who wore a gold chain round his neck, and whom I always understood to

* Subsequently to writing the above account of *Lee*, I have ascertain'd that he underwent the dreadful sentence of the Law, on the 4th of March, 1784.

be the Provost. This was Mr. Maclean, the Laird of *Col*, one of those Scotch Western Islands call'd the Hebrides*. I met him at dinner, in a mix'd party, soon after my arrival in North Britain, when I had everything to learn which appertains to the manners, and etiquette, of the inhabitants;—and, observing that mark'd attention was paid to this ancient chieftain, I was desirous of getting into his good graces.—Every body at table address'd him as “*Col*,”—which appear'd to me a familiarity inconsistent with respect; but, concluding that they were all his old friends, while I was a stranger, I said to him, —“Mr. *Col*, will you do me the honour to drink a glass of wine with me?” He stared me full in the face, without speaking, or even deigning to give me a nod of assent.—I repeated my proposition;—“Mr. *Col*, do me the honour,” &c. &c.; —Mr. *Col* maintain'd his silence, and did not move a muscle.—“Is he deaf,” said I, turning to a gentleman on my right hand, “or what is the matter with him?” “Gude troth,” he whis-

* He was, for several years, an inhabitant of Old Aberdeen, leaving his son (a Captain who had served for some time in the East Indies,) to govern his Hebridian territory. •

per'd, "ye've e'en affronted him, by ca'ing him *Mister*:"—he then explain'd to me that a Chief-tain in the Hebrides, being look'd upon as a kind of petty sovereign, is always styled according to the appellation of his dominions. If, therefore, by possibility, Clapham Common could be a Western Island of Scotland, and Mr. Maclean had been the Laird of it,—I ought not to have call'd him *Mr. Clapham Common*, but *Clapham Common*, short and blunt, without any prefix or addition whatever;—just as, in Shakspeare's Play, Cleopatra is occasionally call'd, both by Mark Antony, and her attendants, *Egypt*.

This custom is, now and then, awkward, when the uncouth names given to some of the aforesaid Western Isles are consider'd; and a well-bred Englishman, in accosting Scottish petty Kings, feels some difficulty in pronouncing,—by way of a respectful salutation,—“How do you do, *Muck**?”

Neither are *EGG* and *RUM* very lofty titles;—

* On reference to authorities, I find that the Laird of this place, thinking the appellation too coarse for his Island, likes it still less for himself, and he is therefore address'd by the title of *Isle of Muck*.—I cannot help thinking that this title is not less coarse, but more ludicrous.

but, then, there is MULL ;—and when these three are mention'd together, they produce combined recollections in a Londoner who has travell'd the North Road, (particularly in winter,) of a hot beverage comfortable to the stomach, though not grand to the mind.

SKY, also, excites no vast idea of landed property, nor any deep deference to the autocracy of a terrestrial proprietor.

I hasten'd to repair my error, as soon as I was aware of it, and attack'd the Chieftain for a third time, with—" Col, allow me to hob-nob with you."—" With all the pleasure in life, young gentleman," roar'd the mighty Col, relaxing his features, and with a Highland accent which struck me as first-cousin to the Irish brogue :—and, thenceforward, was the Old King Col most condescending, and even attentive, to the Younger Colman.—I once sent to him, late at night, when I was laid up by a fever, for a little Lisbon wine, of which I could get none in the town, and which had been prescribed to me, as the best to be taken in *whew* ;—my servant return'd to me with a bottle of it, and, with the Chieftain's compliments, expressing his regret that he had but

two dozen more, which should all be sent to me early in the morning, and he hoped it would do me good. This little trait of generous kindness,—characteristick, I believe, of Highland Chiefs, even in the rude times of their ferocity,—had an Uncle Tobyism about it, which speaks much more home to the human heart than all the “obliging inquiries” with which invalids are flatter’d in London.—Having no need of the proffer’d present, I did not accept it, but I was not the less grateful.

That persons above the level of general society should be tenacious of their rank and titles is natural enough; and without similar feelings in every class of civilized men, according to their graduated stations, we should soon have to deplore that

“The Falcon, towering in his pride of place,
Was, by the mousing Owl, hawk’d at and kill’d.”

When my very dear friend, Francis North (afterwards Earl of Guilford, of whom I shall make further mention, and who, now, alas! is departed,) dined, for the first time, with the late Earl of Llandaff,—an Irish nobleman, who had somewhat of the *vielle-cour* dignity about him,—a certain

(or rather uncertain) quantity of excellent Claret had been drunk, and the party was about to break up ; when the joyous Francis, who sat next to the noble host, put his hand upon the Earl's shoulder, saying, “ Come, Old Daffy ! let us have one more bottle of your Elixir.”

The requested Elixir was produced,—but the Earl never gave my friend a second invitation.

My new habits of reading and writing were not so rigorously observed as to preclude liberal relaxation : and I broke the course of my first twelve months' labours, by indulging in two short visits, of a week each, to Edinburgh. The last of these was in the summer of 1782, during the Leith Race Week*. The race-ground,—if sands can be call'd ground,—was on the shore of the Frith of Forth,—the horses, therefore, were sometimes knee-deep in sand, or water, or both ; and those persons who attended the sports there, and no where else, could scarcely be call'd Men of the *Turf*.

Through a strange whim, the last mention'd journey was commenced *on foot*.—Many a man

* Leith is situated two miles from Edinburgh ; and may be call'd the Sea-Port of that City.

sits in his arm-chair reading fictitious adventures by sea and land,—associating his fireside solace with the amusing incidents in his book,—till he fancies that nothing is so delightful as to travel and to sail. —This romantick feeling is more especially prevalent in our youth, when the mind rarely, if ever, dwells with disquietude upon accounts of the casual mishaps, fatigues, hardships, and inconveniences, of peregrination, though charm'd with the description of Nature's scenery :—and my brains, when a school-boy, had been so deliciously bewilder'd by Cervantes and Le Sage, to the neglect of Greek and Latin, that I long'd to get into Spain, and practically to trace the devious course of Don Quixote, and Gil Blas. I was for falling in with shepherds, and swincherds, and goatherds, and damsels upon donkeys, and monks upon mules, and barbers on a tour, and hermits in a grotto ;—I was for climbing rocks and mountains, dining by a brook, and sleeping under a cork-tree ;—in short, I was for being at least a vagabond, if not a knight-errant.

With these early sparks in my bosom, which had been kindled almost into a flame, by conversations upon the simple manners of the scotch

peasantry, and the sublime and beautiful of some parts of the country, I determined to sally forth in plebeian guise, and spy the nakedness of the land,—most of which, Heaven knows, was naked enough!

To effect this notable project, it was agreed between me and my friend Earle (with whom I had previously arranged to travel in a post-chaise) that we should meet at Edinburgh, instead of going thither together;—he to bring my requisite apparel, in his travelling trunk, to the appointed place of meeting, while I should start as a pedestrian, to perform the exploit, exactly in a week,—with only a One Pound Note in my pocket.—I was to be attended, or rather accompanied, by my servant, carrying a wallet, furnish'd with some clean shirts;—the said servant to behave as my comrade, whenever we came in contact with observers.—The said servant, by the by, after this expedition, turn'd out an “exceeding knave.”

I began my march at ten o'clock, on a beautiful moonlight night, in the middle of summer; my man *Geordy*, as he was call'd, trudging beside me. We were dress'd in coarse jackets, scotch bon-

nets, fillibegs, and tartan hose, and were to have had furloughs from an Officer of a Fencible Regiment, in order to pass for Soldiers who had obtain'd leave of absence, and were going southward in their own clothes, to see some friends in the scotch metropolis:—but when we were many miles on our way, I found that *Geordy* had neglected to obtain the said furloughs; which, as it happen'd, was a matter of some importance*.

We tramp'd over the rugged horrors of a road, part of which I have already described, in my journey from London; and accomplish'd full sixteen miles from Old Aberdeen, without stopping; except for five minutes, at a mean road-side tene-ment, where post-boys and waggoners water'd their horses, and *whisky'd* themselves. It was open at all seasons, in all hours; and, as I was given to understand, most crowded with customers at midnight.—Its only room for all comers had a mud floor, some broken chairs, a tottering long table, and a winking lamp (boasting greater stench than illumination) nail'd against the smoke-

* I believe we could not have worn the dress above described, unless under pretence of belonging to the scottish regiments; the old highland costume, for the peasantry, having been abolish'd.

dried wall, which had once been whitewash'd. This place was fill'd with a company resembling the marauders of Salvator Rosa much more than the boors of Teniers ;—some half drunk, others quite so,—others vigilant, as if in expectation of prey. I thought then, as I think now, that, if the gentry whom I encounter'd there had suspected me to be worth robbing, they would, perhaps, have cut my throat ;—the surrounding country was particularly convenient for throwing a breathless body into a morass, and preventing all *random records* of the transaction.—Such was the first specimen afforded me of those innocent swains whom I had ardently expected to find, in rambling over a Scottish Arcadia.

On reaching Stonehive, between three and four o'clock in the morning, I avoided the *Mill*, where I was known,—the best Inn, by far, in the place, though bad was the best,—and hied me to a house more unpretending in point of customers, but accounted greatly superior in dirt and discomfort. Here I was very desirous of procuring a bed; for, I was not merely tired by the length of the way, but fever'd with pain from the coarse texture of the tartan hose, and a pair of thick new shoes,

which had so excoriated and swollen my feet, that every step I took was torture.

I was not, however, admitted into the last mention'd place of lowly resort. It was, indeed, broad day,—but in a season when there is scarcely any night, and at such an hour of quiet, that every portal in this obscure little maritime town was closed. I sat down upon a stone bench, outside of the Thistle, or the Jenny Cameron, or the Wallace's Head, or whatever might have been the sign,—not at all smiling like Patience on a Monument,—and, in about a quarter of an hour, resumed my weary way.

From Stonchive, I abandon'd the interior route to Edinburgh, through Forfar and Perth, by which I had travell'd when I first came from London; and persued the road which is nearer to the coast.

The fresh morning was unclouded, and delightful; the rising sun gilded a landscape less savage than that we had pass'd;—still the country was wild, exhibiting tracts of heath, intermix'd with patches of cultivated land;—such game of the feather'd tribe as belong to these districts sprang up by the highway side, and hares, regardless of

the early passenger, cross'd the path we were pursuing.

My man Geordy, though not foot-sore, like his master, was what the knowing ones call "*dead beat*." I look'd at him while he was plodding along, and perceived that he was actually walking in his sleep,—an effect of fatigue which appear'd to me a phenomenon ; but which I am told is not uncommon to soldiers upon a distressing march.—The fellow's eyes were fix'd, glassy, and half sunk in their sockets, while he stepp'd forward, as if unconscious of his progress.—I might have fancied myself follow'd by a corpse upon board-wages.

Six miles beyond Stonehive,—about two-thirds of the way from that place to Bervie, on the road to Montrose,—we came to an Inn, standing by itself ;—and, if an Inn were merely the word by which an Inn is express'd, I should have pronounced it to be as forlorn a noun substantive as a tired gentleman could hit upon in a summer's morning. It was call'd "The Temple," and had not been converted into such a Den of Thieves as I first enter'd, and have described. Here, as it was six o'clock, A. M., and the people of

the house all stirring, I, at last, obtain'd repose.

Some philosophers doubt whether the greatest of all corporal pleasure be not immediate mitigation of violent pain. I am not prepared to solve so nice a problem ; but I should readily have given into their persuasion when, with aching limbs, and throbbing feet, I threw myself upon as hard a flock bed as ever could have been press'd, even by the weight of a travelling tinker.

I arose at noon,—much less punish'd, as to body and joints in general, than I had expected ; but a founder'd pedestrian cannot sleep off his lameness in the short space of six hours ;—and he who has happen'd to see a Turk under the bastinado, or a Trooper standing on the picket, may form some notion of my sensations when, after having once more pull'd on the horrible tartan hose, and cramm'd my lower extremities into the tight shoes, I recommenced my toilsome journey.

As to my man Geordy,—who had, before he enter'd into my service, trudged the Highlands,—his callous feet were little more susceptible of feeling than the claws of a dining-table ; weariness, indeed, would cause him (as I have shown) to sleep

during a night march of one and twenty miles ; but, in a long work, even the mighty Homer was permitted to nod*.

There was a distance of rather more than fifteen miles from the Temple to Montrose, which Town it was my determination to reach, though at a cripple's pace, in the evening.

I sat out, about one o'clock, P. M., in much misery, getting easier as I went on, by getting warmer, like a batter'd post-horse ;—not halting *at* Bervie, but halting *through* it, nor stopping at any house of entertainment for travellers. Occasionally, we walk'd up to some cottage door, where the “gude wife,” who staid at home, while her “gude man” was labouring in the field, would give us whey, or butter-milk, and offer us oaten cakes, or whatever else the humble dwelling could afford. This hospitable custom I found to be universal among the scottish peasantry,—at least as well as I could judge in my week's wild excursion,—and was one, out of very few instances, to realize the non-

* “ Indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus ;
Verum opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum.”

sensical notions which I had derived from a taste for the *beau idéal* of pastoral romance.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, we came to a brook, which cross'd the road, and was not, then, much above ancle deep ; it was surmounted by a slight bridge,—the last of several which penury or improvidence had thrown over it ; and which had been successively swept away, when the rippling stream was swollen into a torrent by the rains of winter.

Tempted by a green field, and urged by a craving appetite, I sat me down near the margin of this rivulet, on a spot a little removed from the high-way, to dine under a stone-hedge. I wish'd it had been under the shade of a timber-tree ;—but timber-trees are very scarce articles in Scotland,—bating certain forests of the frowning Fir, intermix'd with a few hardy companions, (such as the Larch, and Mountain-Ash,) of a less funereal description.

Geordy open'd his wallet, and produced from it some cold ribs of lamb, a little salt screw'd up in a bit of brown paper, and a small loaf of home-made bread, all purchased at the Temple. These luxuries he placed upon a white napkin, which he

had spread upon the turf, much to my satisfaction; although my clean shirts in said wallet could not have been sweeter from the commixture of wardrobe and larder.

As the grass served me both for chair and dining-table, I dispensed with the dignity of a servant waiting behind me, and e'en *invited him to the sitting*;—at which he so far outdid me in making a voracious repast, that, when I told him to *take away*, there was nothing left but the bare bones of the lamb and a little of the salt.

I travell'd, be it remember'd, with a convenient apparatus,—a *multum in parvo*, containing, (besides a knife, fork, and spoon,) a small case bottle and a tumbler; so that I wash'd down my repast with some excellent brandy, diluted with water from the brook. This beverage, of which I took several tumblers, (but, indeed, dear temperate reader, they were *very* small ones,) so refresh'd and cheer'd me, *pro tempore*, that I began to doubt whether I was an ass or not, for having placed myself in such a situation.

Spite of lameness, rough roads, high hills, and hot weather, I perform'd my intended fifteen miles, from the Temple, at the rate of two miles

and a half an hour, as to actual progress ; to which must be added about an hour and a half more, pass'd in loitering at cottages, and dining *allog scoperto* ;—and the sun had set, after a sultry summer's day, when we enter'd the neat and cheerful town of Montrose. This seaport, of some consideration, is situated on the east side of the shire of Angus, upon the coast of the German Ocean, and at the mouth of the river South Esk, which constitutes its harbour :—It contains some well built houses, a town-hall, and an hospital for the poor ; notwithstanding which last, it is at this place that Doctor Johnson observes, “ there are many beggars in Scotland.”

It was not for foot-passengers in fillibegs to strut into the first-rate Inns, (of which there were two* in Montrose,) and call about them ;—no traveller under the dignity of an equestrian, from a commercial Firm, trotting about the country upon a horse caparison'd with saddle bags full of samples, ever frequented these *hostelries* (as Chaucer calls Inns) of a superior order ;—we, therefore, sought more humble accommodation ; and in passing

* One of these was kept by an Englishman ; I visited them both, in the following year ; and candour must confess that the Scotchman bore away the palm from his rival.

through a *wynd*, or side lane, at the back of the main street, we observed an elderly woman who stood at the door of her lonely habitation, to enjoy the freshness of the evening air. On a pane of her cottage window, in a line with the door, she had pasted a paper which announced a Room to let ;—there was still sufficient twilight to read the inscription, and it induced me to ask her whether she could give us a night's lodging ; telling her, at the same time, our ready-made story, that we were Soldiers, on leave of absence, to visit our friends in Edinburgh ; and adding the plain truth, that I had fallen lame on the journey. After the first slight glance at our figures and faces, she fix'd her eyes more firmly upon *me*, and exclaim'd, “ Eh, gude Lord ! ye're e'en the vera picture o' my dear lost Willie !—come laddie, step in, for ye maun be forjesket* : ”—we enter'd the cottage accordingly.

Who her dear lost Willie might be, I could not, at the moment, understand ; but she soon

* “ *Forjesket* ” is jaded with fatigue :—But I must here make a virtue of necessity, in confessing that I have forgotten most of the Scotch phraseology which I once possess'd, and therefore, substitute, with a kind of half recollection, a jargon of my own :—In deficiency of the actual language utter'd by a native of Scotland, it

afterwards gave me an account of him ;—it was a history of sorrow,—and her simple recital of it was doubly pathetick from the effort she made to subdue her grief.

Willie, it seems, was her only child ;—and “ Waes me !” she said, “ my darling laddie, and my ain gude-man, his father, hae left me here, my lane.—It ha’ pleased Providence to snatch them baith awa’ thegither,—for they died in anither’s arms.”

I, then, gather’d from the broken way in which she told her story,—for, during the whole of it, she was bustling about for our accommodation,—that her husband had been a fisherman, and had brought up their boy to the same trade ;—that one fine morning, in the last Autumn, father and son had put out to sea, in the exercise of their usual occupation ;—it happen’d to be the twentieth anniversary of her Willie’s birthday, and she had prepared a little feast for the occasion, to surprise, on their evening return home, those two, in all the world, whom religious ties and instinctive nature had drawn the closest to her heart ;—

may relieve the flatness of narrative by thus giving (as the lawyers have it) “ words to that effect.”

and with whom she was never, never, to partake her humble bread again!—A furious gale had arisen as the day advanced,—the tempest howl'd along the German Ocean,—and a little fleet of fishing-boats, which had smoothly glided forth, at morn, upon a glassy sea, now scudded to land over the foaming billows. The boat which contain'd Willie and his father was the only one upset among the breakers; while the agonized wife and mother stood upon the beach, among the crowd which had collected there in the vain wish of rendering them assistance.—She remember'd to have seen them clinging to one another in the surge, but all that happen'd afterwards seem'd to her like a hideous dream;—a fever had confined her, she knew not how long, to her bed,—and her mind had wander'd;—but, after her recovery, she was told, by the female friend who tended her while the fever raged, that, she had utter'd a dismal shriek when a wave burst over her husband and her son, and hurried them from her sight, for ever;—that she had, then, fallen senseless on the sands, and was carried on a plank, which the storm had cast on shore, to her widow'd childless home.

But the poor soul bow'd in humble resignation

to the will of Heaven ;—and “ God be thankit,” she said, clasping her hands fervently together, “ for sending friends to succour me in the days of my dool* !” —The drown’d Fisherman and his Son had, it seems, borne such an excellent character, that their melancholy deaths made a strong sensation in Montrose, and excited great compassion for the widow. The Directors of the Hospital sent her medical aid, with all that was requisite for her support, during her sickness :—the wealthiest inhabitants of the place open’d a subscription for her more permanent relief, in which almost all the town’s-folk join’d, according to their various means :—these helps, with her own industry, in needle-work and mantua-making, procured her a livelihood, and enabled her to enjoy (since most of our worldly wants are rather comparative than absolute†) that kind of decent com-

* “ *Dool*,”—Grief.

† “ O, reason not the need ; our basest beggars
Are in the poorest things superfluous :
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man’s life is cheap as beasts.”

SHAKSPEARE.

fort which might induce a man of broken fortune to commit suicide.

After a homely supper of new laid eggs and bacon, the good woman told us that she had a bed for me, and another for Geordy, in the *spence*. The Spence, as it is term'd, in Scotland, is a back parlour,—generally so confined in its dimensions, (as was the case in the present instance,) that a stranger wonders, not at its holding two beds,—but how it can hold one*. This is soon explain'd by pulling back sliding panels in the wainscot, or sometimes opening folding doors, behind which there are beds in recesses, looking like those constructed in small packet-boats, where passengers are stow'd for the night.

How uncertain are the events of human life !—The odds were a million to one, when I got up from table in the *but*, to go to bed in the *ben*, that I should have gone to bed as I intended :—I did no such thing ;—for, in proceeding to execute

* The ground-floor of a great number of houses, in Scotland, consists of a kitchen in front, and the *Spence*, or parlour, at the back of it; in which last the provisions are often kept. These two apartments are contradistinguish'd as the "*but and ben*."

my resolves, I felt so thoroughly crippled that I declared the impracticability of continuing the journey *on foot*, next morning ; and, therefore, I speculated (Montrose being a Sea-port) upon getting some conveyance in a vessel which would land us near Edinburgh.—My servant, to whom I half address'd this, as a seeming proposition to a fellow-traveller, of course gave his assent to the plan.

“A-weel,” said the widow, “ye’ll easy procure a passage i’ the morn ; for ye’re baith Sogers, ye ken, and need na fash yoursels aboot the King’s Cutter i’ the harbour.”—She then explain’d to us that this same Cutter had been, for three days, and still was, lying within the mouth of the South Esk, man’d by a press-gang, under the command of a lieutenant ;—a formidable piece of intelligence, which made me instantly and anxiously inquire of Geordy what he had done with our furloughs ;—when it appear’d, to our utter dismay, that the careless scoundrel had never troubled his head about them ; and had started with me, from Aberdeen, without calling on the Officer who had promised to furnish them.—Here

was a dilemma!—The pretended Soldiers were likely to be forced into real Service, as Sailors ;—and the probable transition from King's College to a King's Ship, in order to fight, at so short a notice, His Majesty's battles against the Mounseers, the Mynheers, and the Dons, (for we were, then, if I recollect right, at war with France, Holland, and Spain,) appear'd to me much more awkward, as a personal revolution, than my projected banishment from Aberdeen to London.—In the latter instance, I should have only been thrown back upon my father's hands, who would have been in a furious rage with me ;—but, between a banish'd son and a *vanish'd* son, there is a wide difference in a father's feelings ; and had I been hurried on board a Man of War, my disconsolate parent must have accounted for my disappearance by supposing me smother'd in a scotch quagmire, —as the times were gone by for being whisk'd away upon a broomstick, by one of Macbeth's witches.

If I had fallen in with the rawhead-and-bloody-bones lieutenant,—his cutlass in hand, and his crew at his back,—there can be little or no doubt that he would have handed me over, *sans cere-*

monie, to his superior Officer on board some Frigate, and that I should have been for a long time “*missing* ;”—for how was I to prove to them at the moment, or induce them to take the trouble of investigating, so improbable a tale, (although it was fact,) that two apparently common highlanders were an english gentleman and his servant, taking a week’s walk together, in masquerade, with a one pound note between them ?

Luckily, the widow recollected that a vessel which had been unlading a freight of coals was to sail, on its return to the Frith of Forth, as soon as the morning tide would serve ;—so she hasten’d down to the harbour, and told us, when she came back, that one of the two men who navigated the collier was her relation ; that he would take us on board at midnight, under his own particular guardianship, victual us during the day, and land us next evening at Kirkaldy, which is on the north side of the Frith, nearly opposite to Leith :—all this he had faithfully promised her to perform, *for nothing*.

The pains which the good dame had taken to

save our money for us, were infinitely more touching than the economical lectures of old Rory Macleod:—nor was she content with only procuring us a protector, a passage, and a day's living, *gratis*, up the Frith;—for I could not prevail upon her to accept from us the slightest remuneration, for all her hospitality and trouble. My likeness, real or imaginary, to her lost Son, seem'd to have taken a strong hold on her mind, and to have inspired her with a kind of maternal interest for me, independent of the natural charitableness of her disposition.

When the Town Clock had struck twelve, she conducted us to the harbour, walking some paces before us, as a scout, to give the alarm in case of danger. But her precaution, as it happen'd, was redundant; for the moon was down, and “not a mouse stirring.”—On reaching a boat in which a boy was waiting, to row us to the ship, she wish'd us both a prosperous voyage; and, resting her hands for an instant, in an agitated manner, upon my head, as if to give me a blessing,—“Fare thee well, laddie,” she cried, “and the Lord shield thee fra' the fate o' my puir darling Willie!”

The exterior of the two men who received us on board was in admirable harmony (as well as I could then see) with the dingy appearance of the Collier ;—and no sooner had we embark'd than the widow's relation, in the redundancy of his inflictive beneficence, order'd us under hatches, for our better security. I petition'd him to postpone this stifling act of kindness, as there was not yet light enough to fear that we should be discover'd ; and, in such a vessel, I anticipated descending into something like a coal-hole ;—but no ;—he had promised that we should not be press'd ;—he was a loving monster,—so down he cram'd us.—The place was as I expected, hot, small, noisome, and as dark as pitch ;—here, however, I obtain'd a sound sleep of more than five hours, in my clothes, upon some packages which lay on the floor ;—after which I was awaken'd, about six o'clock in the morning, by heaving the anchor ; and soon perceived, from the ship's motion, that we were in progress down the river.

By my order, Geordy mounted a short ladder, lifted up a trap-door, and then thrust his head

through the aperture, at the top of our floating dungeon, to ascertain how far we had advanced, when he received so astounding a shock upon his pate, from the iron hand of our *guardian*, upon deck, that it tumbled him back again, into the shades below.

“ It had been so with us, had we been there ;”—

but I had, by chance, told Geordy to reconnoitre just at the crisis when we were passing the dreaded King’s Cutter, at the mouth of the South Esk ; and the protecting Sea-Bear, who laid him low, must have had no little anxiety on our account, if his care for our persons might be appreciated by the power of his paw.

Having got out of the Port without let or molestation, and been nearly an hour on the open sea, where there was no appearance of any Ship of War, Caution itself could be no longer apprehensive ;—our tutelary coal-heaver, therefore, permitted us to quit our durance, “ *superasque evadere ad auras.*” As we crept up the ladder, out of darkness, upon deck, the scene which burst upon us,—or rather, our bursting upon the

scene,—was extremely exhilarating, and more so from the suddenness of the contrast.

Sun-beams danced gaily upon the waves, which a north-west breeze had put into active, but not turbulent, motion. Our canvass was all spread, and we were going merrily under a steady and favourable wind ;—the waters were dotted with trading vessels ;—the German ocean, in which we were sailing, was bounded, on our left, by nothing but the horizon ; while on our right lay the land, which is always, to an inhabitant of it, a cheering ingredient in a marine prospect.

During the first half of the voyage, we sail'd due south, keeping the shires of Angus and Fife constantly in sight ; which exhibited, as we coasted along their eastern borders, a much more effective variety of views (begging the Managers' pardon) than any of those shifting candle-light Panoramas, painted in distemper, which have been produced at the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, although the said Panoramas have very great merit.—On the line of coast from Montrose to the Forth, we pass'd, according to their regular order of succession, the Promontory call'd Red-Head, a conspicuous object far off at

Sea ;—Aberbrothick*, famed for its Ruins of the greatest Abbey in Scotland, with the Grampian Hills at some distance behind them ;—the Estuary of the Tay, which river Julius Agricola (whom Camden calls the best of Pro-Prætors, under Domitian, the worst of Emperors,) made the boundary of the Roman conquests in North Britain ;—St. Andrews,—once an Archiepiscopal See, and the magnificent metropolis of Scotland, now a decay'd grass-grown City, with a declining University :—these are the chief places worthy of enumeration before we came to Fifeness ; whence we changed our course to a western direction, at the opening of the Frith of Forth, which is very picturesque.

A large mouth is ugly, in most instances ; but the mouth of this Frith is more beautiful from being many miles wide.—Near the extremities of its opposite shores, lie Crail, Kilrenny, East and West Anstruther, and the harbour of Pitten-weem†, in Fifeshire, on one side, and the ruins of Tautallon Castle, in East Lothian, on the

* Commonly pronounced *Arbroath*.

† All these Boroughs have one and the same representative in Parliament,—Crail is the returning Borough.

other. Between these points, several little islands are scatter'd, the most conspicuous of which are the Isle of May, and the Bass.

The May is on the northern side of the Frith ; —is about a mile long, and a quarter of a mile broad ; and boasts only one constant inhabitant of the human species,—the poor solitary devil who keeps up the nightly fire in the Light-House.

This Light-House, by the by, (built in thè reign of our Charles the First,) might have an inscription upon it, to record the superstition of the times in which it was erected :—'The Builder, while the work was in progress, was drown'd in a storm, as he was returning, one night, to his house in Fife, from the Island ;—for which (*horrible dictu!*) some poor old women, after being pronounced guilty of raising the tempest, were condemn'd to death, and executed !

On the Lothian, or south-side, of the Frith, the Isle of Bass rears its circular form high above the water, affording one steep, and only landing-place, by steps cut in the rock.—This place was formerly the residence of an ancient scottish family ; afterwards, it served for a state prison, in the

reigns of Charles the second, and his abdicating brother James ; and Pirates had possession of it, for some time, after the revolution.—Though surrounded by sea, it has a spring of fresh water at its top. I give an extract from a book now before me, relative to the *Solan Geese* which frequent the Bass ; and as the account of them is somewhat curious, it may atone for its length.

“ The *Solan Geese* are the principal inhabitants of this Island, a fowl rare as to its kind ; for they are not found any where in *Britain*, that I can learn, except here, in some of the lesser Islands in the *Orcades*, and in the Isle of *Ailzye*, in the mouth of the *Clyde*. They come as certainly at their season as the swallows or woodcocks, with this difference, (if what the people there tell us may be depended on,) that they generally come exactly to the very same day of the month.

“ They feed mostly on herrings : and, therefore, it is observed they come just before, or with them, and go away with them likewise, though it is evident they do not follow them ; for they go all away to the North, but whither is not known. As they live on fish, so their flesh has the taste

of fish, which, together with their being so exceedingly fat, makes them, in my opinion, a very coarse dish, rank, ill relish'd, and soon cloy's the stomach. But here they are look'd upon as a dainty.

“ It is a large fowl, rather bigger than an ordinary goose. It is web-footed, but its bill is pointed like a crane or heron, only much thicker, and not above five inches long. When they are coming, they send some before to fix their mansion, which for that reason are call'd scouts.— The inhabitants are careful not to disturb them, till they have built their nests, and then they are not to be frighten'd by any noise whatsoever.— They lay but one egg at a time, which they so dexterously fix by one end to a point of the rock in the middle of the nest, that, if it be pull'd off, it is difficult to fix it so any more. They hatch it by holding it fast under one foot, and seldom leave it till it be hatch'd.

“ The fish caught by the old ones often serve the inhabitants for food, and the sticks they bring to make their nests, supply them with fuel. They make great profit both of the flesh and feathers of their young ones, which are taken from their nests,

by one let down the rock with a rope. When young, they are of an ash colour ; when old, white.”—
(*A Tour through Scotland.*)

Border’d, both on the right and left, by a populous country*, we sail’d down,—no, we sail’d *up* the Forth,—till we came before sunset to Kirkaldy.

Here, as the Collier had completed her voyage, I and Geordy were put into a boat, and carried three miles further to Kinghorn ; from which place to Leith, on the other side of the Frith, (which is here narrow’d to seven miles,) there is a ferry.—In taking leave of our two navigators, I thank’d our *guardian*, in particular, for all his oppressive super-attentions, which had considerably bored, and annoy’d me. My servant, however, parted with him in sulky silence ;—Geordy

* On the right-border, in Fifeshire, there are, between Pit-tenweem and Kirkaldy, various small towns and villages, the inhabitants of which are busily occupied in their several trades, as coal-diggers, salt-makers, linen-manufacturers, and fishermen.—In the midst of these stands the mansion of the Earl of Wemyss, near his coal-mines, upon a high cliff, overlooking the Frith :—The left border, in Lothian, (the most fertile county in Scotland) equals, indeed exceeds, the other, in population, trade, and seats, of the Scottish Nobles and Gentles.

was by no means grateful for the thump on the head, bestow'd upon him out of sheer regard for his safety, in going out of Montrose harbour ;— he had brooded over it all the day ; “ Essex a blow ! ”—Ye Gods, what indignity !—he could not revenge it, for the Man of Coals could have eaten him up in a minute,—but he never forgave it.

On landing, we procured a couple of beds “ in the worst Inn’s worst room,” and early next morning walk’d into a Barber’s shop to be shaved ;—where I disbursed one penny to the artist who skilfully perform’d upon me this tonsorial operation.—However small my immediate funds, I did not deem the expenditure extravagant, till Geordy’s superlative genius for economy threw my notions of thrift completely into shade. He had, during the time I was under the Barber’s hands, shaved *himself* ;—he, therefore, insisted, with greater vehemence, than success, that, although he had used the said Barber’s shaving implements, and materials, a demand upon him for more than half-price (that is, a halfpenny) would be gross extortion.

While the Caledonian Dicky Gossip was

smoothing my chin, he imparted news which made the hairs on my head to stand on end!—*Pressing*, he told me, was going on very briskly, in his town;—a party on this service had been there on the previous day,—another might come to-morrow,—the place, he said, was never many days without one, and he was in the habit, lately, of seeing many of his customers taken off, as fast as he could take off their beards;—in short, it appear'd that there was no safety for us; and that, by coming from Montrose to Kinghorn, we had only illustrated the vulgar adage of the frying-pan and the fire, or the more classical, though equally thread-bare saying, of Scylla and Charybdis.

But what was to be done?—Our day's voyage had advanced us much too rapidly on our way. We were within nine miles (seven by water and two by land) of Edinburgh;—I could not go thither, directly, where I was known to some few, to walk about the Scottish Metropolis, habited like young Norval from the Grampian hills;—and, 'till the arrival there of my friend Earle, who had all my clothes in his trunk, I could have no means of changing my dress.—There was no way

left for us, but to dodge the danger as well as we could,—by avoiding the town, and the sea-shore,—seeking the heights in the vicinity of Kinghorn, and strolling for food and lodging to such adjacent farm-houses and villages as were situated inland.

Loitering thus about the Country, for a few days, was such a repose, in comparison with the severe march I had perform'd on starting from Aberdeen, that I was no longer foot-sore :—But, reposing upon bare hills, beneath a scorching Sun, (as I sometimes did, for an hour or two at a time,) produced an inconvenience which I had not foreseen. The upper portion of my english legs, unaccustom'd to that space of highland nudity which is exhibited between the fillibeg and the tartan hose, was half-broil'd by the solar beams,—insomuch that the effect was little less annoying than my lameness.

Since this accident, I never refer to the alarm given after Duncan's murder, in the Tragedy of Macbeth, without a tribute of admiration to the good taste of Banquo ;—who, although himself a highland General, and, no doubt, inured to all weathers, advises his companions, to “ hide

their naked frailties,” which he thinks must
“ suffer in exposure.”*

It was time, at last, to leave the regions in which I had spun out the greater part of the week prescribed for the performance of my journey ; and had found refuge, also, from those Salt-water Subalterns who illustrate the naval song, of “ Britons never will be Slaves,” by forcing men from their homes and families into the sea-service : Towards the close, therefore, of the fifth day from my landing in Fifeshire, (having engaged to be at Edinburgh on the morrow,) I sent forth Geordy to reconnoitre ; and, upon his report that the coast was clear from the enemy, I descended with him from our holds and fastnesses to the water’s edge, where we mingled with a crowd of passengers in the Kinghorn ferry-boat, and were landed at Leith, in the dusk, after little more than an hour’s sail.

We took up our quarters, for the night, close to the Quay, at an Inn, or rather publick-house, which Mr. Earle’s servant happen’d to recollect,

* “ And when we have our naked frailties hid,
 That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
 And question this most bloody piece of work, .
 To know it further.” SHAKSPEARE.

and described, before we left Aberdeen, as the place to which he would bring my clothes on coming to Edinburgh, with his master. The proprietress of this marine mansion, who, though a Landlady of Leith, differ'd only in dialect from a Landlady of Wapping, cramm'd us for the night into a couple of dog-holes which she call'd bed-chambers ;—they were closets, with a wretched curtainless flock-bed in each, but with nothing else whatever. On her lighting me to my kennel, I ventured to observe upon the total absence of every article for the purpose of ablution ; when, telling me that there was a pump below, and a jack-towel hanging up in the kitchen, for all such “ loons ” as I, she bang'd the door after her, and left me in utter darkness.—I was forced, therefore, to creep into bed like persons who came home after the Curfew had been toll'd, in the unenlighten'd times of William the Conqueror.

Next morning, I breakfasted by the *kitchen fireside* ;—a situation (as we were then in the month of July) only fit to solace a Salamander ; but the cooler latitudes of the kitchen were occupied by groupes of sea-faring customers.—After my breakfast, Geordy drew a comb and curling-

tongs from his wallet, and, having procured a little powder and pomatum from a *perruquier*, who frizzled a trading Ship's Captain, lodging in the house, began to dress my hair, previously to the expected arrival of my wardrobe.

This operation proceeded greatly to the astonishment of the amphibious animals then present; who silently look'd on, while the fashionable toupée, the ribbon-bound queue, and the three curls on a side, were all rapidly forming on the head of an itinerant in a shabby jacket, and a kilt*.—I certainly must have presented a very *heterogeneous* figure.—Just as the grand work was completed, and I was *bien-powdré*, the Landlady enter'd, and stood aghast;—at that moment, too, Earle's servant drove up to the door, in the post-chaise which had brought his master to Edinburgh.—Geordy, then, thought fit to proclaim who and what I was, and to add, that I had been roaming over the country *for a wager*.

The declaration of my being a gentleman, supported by the evidence of wearing a powder'd pate, savour'd of the discovery so often practised

* *Kilt* and *fillibegs* are synonymous.

upon the stage, when a disguised hero suddenly unbuttons his surtout, and proves he is a great man by showing a very fine waistcoat*. The effect on “mine hostess” was prodigious!—She hurried me into the room behind the bar, whither my clothes had been carried, that I might finish my toilette there; and, after producing a wash-hand basin, jug of water, &c., she unlock’d a chest of drawers, and spread before me napkins in profusion. I told her not to trouble herself, as I knew where to find the jack-towel, and the pump,—which set her bobbing and curtseying, and apologizing, at a furious rate.—“Oh, your honour,” she

* SHERIDAN has ridiculed this absurdity, in his Farce of “*The Critick*,” by making the supposed Yeoman of the Guard throw off his dress, and exclaim,

“*Am I a Beef-Eater now?*”

The usual wording of directions in Play-Books, upon such occasions, is—“*discovers himself*,”—but this is vague and puzzling for the Actor, as many of the directions are.—I have heard of an old Play where a Miser repents, *in dumb show*, of his sordid disposition, at the end of the fifth act; and it is set forth in a marginal note, that he “*leans against the wall, and grows generous*.” I know not by what device the performer could indicate such a mental revolution, to the Audience,—unless by *giving the wall* to the first comer.

said, “ wha wad ha’ dream’d o’ sic a thing?—had I kenn’d that your honour had been you honour,” —and then she went on, in a strain of toadyism equal to her previous insolence.

Alas ! there are, in this wide world, too many likenesses of my Landlady !—too many mean-minded folks, both in low life and in *high*, who can only show their respect, or their consequence, by servility and overbearance ;—and who cringe to those above them, in the same ratio as they are arrogant to their inferiors in rank or fortune.

My One Pound Note, with which I started on my adventure, had dwindled to eighteen-pence ; but I had arranged that a small supply should accompany my clothes ;—so I paid an extortionate bill for very scurvy entertainment, and got into the post-chaise ;—the two servants seated themselves on the bar, in front of the vehicle, while the gentry who had witness’d the beginning of my metamorphosis, in the kitchen, came out to the door, to see me set off, and gave me three cheers at my departure.

I reach’d Edinburgh most thoroughly cured of

my fancy for the *Scotch Pastoral*; and, had I been desired to repeat the excursion, I should have felt like the unsportsmanlike person once present at a fox-chase,—who, on being afterwards ask'd to go a-hunting, answer'd,—“no, thank you, *I have been.*”

CHAPTER SIXTH.

“ Nunc *auktionem* facere decretum est mihi.”

PLAUTUS.

“ The *Quakers*, however, are so considerable as to merit some attention.”

HUME, HIST. OF ENG.

“ I have heard (but not believed) the Spirits of the dead
May walk again.”

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the Leith race-week was over, Earle and I return'd to King's College together, in a style partaking both of the aristocrattick and the *shabby-genteel* ; for we started a couple of outriders (our two servants on horseback) as a dashing escort to our sorry conveyance of a hack chaise and pair.

Now, a hack post-chaise being, in most instances, a clattering, whirring, jingling vehicle, whose peculiar qualities consist of inflexible springs, a narrow seat, and a perpendicular back,—doors which must be *slamm'd* before they are shut, and which fly open again at the first jolt,—iron door-steps, doubled up inside, swinging

against your leg,—musty straw under your feet, and a broken glass peep-hole close behind your head,—one window, out of four, which won't pull up, and another that won't let down,—all of them shadeless and crack'd, that you may be blinded by the sun, and pelted with the showers ;—these being its characteristicks,—who, let me ask, would willingly be box'd up and jumbled about in it, over hill and dale, for hours together ?—paying fifteen or eighteen pence per mile, to have his body and bones pummell'd, bump'd, bruised, dislocated, and bedevil'd !—Look at such a carriage abstractedly, it is an engine of torture, worthy the invention of a Spanish Inquisitor :—But take it *comparatively* ;—first explore your weary way as I did, from Aberdeen to Edinburgh, as a foot-passenger, and then get into one of these infernal machines,—why, sir, it is a luxury !—at least I found it so ;—and well, no doubt, was that luxury estimated by the Irish Traveller, whose system was evidently built upon bifold practice, before he composed his celebrated distich of

“ When I'm rich, I ride in chaises,
When I'm poor, I walk, by Jasus !”

Shortly after my return to College, I sat down

to write my *First Play* ;—and *boy's play* I made of it !—trusting at the beginning of my fable entirely to chance for a middle and an end. I had no materials for a plot, further than the common-place foundation of a marriage projected by parents, contrary to the secret views and wishes of the parties to be united ; and which, of course, is to be obviated by the usual series of stratagems, accidents, and equivoques. Alas ! what those stratagems, &c., were to be, or how the second scene was to be conducted, I had not any idea, while I was writing the first :—but, having finish'd the first, I hurried on into the second, with as little forecast about the third ;—and so on, from scene to scene, spinning out stage *business* (as it is term'd) as I went along, and scribbling at hap-hazard, “ as humours and conceits might govern,” till I came to the conclusion of *Act One*.

One Act completed, enabled me to proceed somewhat less at random, in the two acts to come, by obliging me to consider a little about the means of continuing, and then unravelling, the perplexities I had already created ;—still I persevered, as to whole Acts, in the same want of regular plan which had mark'd my progress, in

respect to Scenes;—at Christmas, however, I found that I had flounder'd through two thirds of a Three-Act Piece, which I call'd a Musical Comedy, under the title of "*Two to One*," and which I have already mention'd in the fourth chapter of this volume.

In this improvident way I have written all my dramas, which are not founded either on some historical incident, or on some story or anecdote, which I have met with in print;—and, of those thus founded, I never made out a scheme of progressive action before I began upon the dialogue.

The historical incidents to which I have been indebted have, of course, help'd me, in some measure, to see my way in the formation of a Plot; but they have not been of a nature to furnish me with materials for a whole play;—no more have the fictitious stories, except one*;—so that, even when I have borrow'd a little, I have coin'd a great deal; and have coin'd (to use a common phrase) *off-hand*.

It is out of my power to ascertain in what

* "*Things as they are*; or the *Adventures of Caleb Williams*, written by William Godwin." This Novel is best known by its second title.

manner all Poets buckle to their task ;—but if Bayes's question of "*how do you do when you write?*" were put to every living Dramatist, I doubt whether any two of them would answer alike :—at all events, I presume to think that not one of them goes into training for the undertaking after Bayes's own original receipt ;—" If," says he, " I am to write familiar things, I make use of stew'd prunes only ; but, when I have a grand design in hand, I ever take physick, and let blood."

Æschylus, we are told, took a directly opposite course,—drinking deep before he could flash his poetical fires, or thunder his dithyrambicks ; his style was, in consequence, so very vehement, that Aristophanes call'd him a Mad Bull, and Sophocles said of him, (but he was a rival, remember,) that his Tragedies were produced by the Wine, and not by the Poet.—I know not whether any modern Bards may follow the bibacious Grecian's example ; but certainly some of them indulge in flights which are none of the soberest ;—while several, on the other hand, if they be water-drinkers, have resorted to Hippocrene less than to any other fountain, for their potations.

I have heard of an indefatigable Author whose method was to write five and twenty Acts, and then to reduce them to five, by paring down his exuberances;—of another, who so matured his plan, that he always wrote his last Act first;—and of a third, who was so plagued and puzzled in making *denouements*, that he was for abolishing the last Acts of Plays, altogether.—Various, indubitably, are the modes of going to work upon a theatrical entertainment;—but, if I were to start afresh, as a dramatist, (*quod Dii avertant!*) I would so far profit from experience as to abide by the few following resolutions:—

First,—To draw up a *Prospectus* of the Story and the Stage Business, previously to beginning to write the Play. This I believe to be the practice of most Authors. My father made an Outline, of the above kind, (which I have publish'd*,) for the Comedy of The Clandestine Marriage, under three different heads; namely, “Idea of Principal Characters;” “Rough Draught of the General Scheme;” and “Loose Hints of Acts and Scenes:”

Secondly,—To avoid much precision, and de-

* See “*Addenda* to POSTHUMOUS LETTERS to the *Colmans*.”

tail, in the Prospectus ; for, by filling up the outline too minutely, there is danger of fettering fancy, and checking further invention, while writing the Play.—When an Author is contented with what he has specifically set down for himself to do, he is less likely to warm with the subject as he proceeds ;—it is natural for him to go plodding on, without eliciting such new matter as is sometimes happily produced from the spur of the moment.—Criticks have been pleased to observe, that, it was a good hit when I made Inkle offer Yarico for sale to the person whom he afterwards discovers to be his intended father-in-law* ;—The hit, good or bad, only occur'd to me when I came to that part of the Piece in which it is introduced, and arose from the accidental turn which I had given to previous scenes ;—as it is not in the original story, it would, in all probability, *not* have occur'd to me while coldly preparing an elaborate prospectus ;—and such a prospectus once made, it is ten to one that I should have follow'd it mechanically.

† ——— “ The incident of Inkle's happening to make the offer of Yarico for sale to the governor of Barbadoes, his intended father-in-law, without knowing him, is a very happy idea.

Thirdly,—In chusing to strike out a Drama from some historical fact, or ready-made tale of fiction, always to select a *short* and single one ;—by single, I mean free from complications. A scanty subject, which requires to be amplified, both stimulates the imagination, and gives it *elbow-room* : Hence new characters are engrafted upon the original stock, new incidents grow out of the appropriated ground ; and the Dramatist obtains greater credit when his own creative Muse has assisted in laying out a patch taken from the Common.

In the Play of “The Battle of Hexham” (my first raw attempt at that kind of Drama) I took little more than the historical hint of Queen Margaret’s adventure with the Robber ;—in “The Surrender of Calais” my superstructure was raised upon the simple basis of Edward the Third ordering six french citizens to be hang’d. The *Biographia Dramatica* asserts, that, I have borrow’d the Plot from a Novel call’d “*The Siege of Calais* :”—I have read that Novel, but am not conscious of being thus indebted to it.—The Opera of “Inkle and Yarico” owes its origin to a page or two in the *Spectator* ;—in these, and other

instances*, where I adopted less limited though not extensive ground-works, I found, or fancied I found, that, (however eligible the subjects which I borrow'd) if the loans had been larger, I should have been duller.

I had almost forgotten my obligations to the Parisian Stage;—but there is much adulteration in those few light Dramas which I have imported from abroad; and my versions of them may be call'd, (as Sneer says in *The Critick*) “*not translations, but only taken from the French.*”

Fourthly,—Which is a kind of corollary from the third resolution,—as, indeed, the third is a branch from the second;—Never to dramatize a Novel of two or three volumes;—there is so much to reject for want of room, yet so much to compress which cannot be left out, that the original is mutilated, while the copy is encumber'd.

The Novel-Writer and Dramatist arrive at the same point by two different roads; and that mode of conducting a story which is a help to the first, is a hinderance to the latter;—the first interests you, by expanding his matter; the latter wearies

* “*The Africans*,” taken from a compendious Tale, in the french language, by Florian; and “*The Mountaineers*,” partly from the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes.

you, if he do not condense it. Minuteness of detail, and a slow developement of the main characters and events, by previous narration, and foregoing occurrences, heighten the effects of a Novel ;—a Play must plunge *in medias res* ; must avoid (or at all events curtail) *narratives* as much as possible ;—must bring forward its *dramatis personæ* with little or no preparation, and keep attention alive by brevity of dialogue, and rapidity of action :—

The difficulty, therefore, of transplanting a Novel, chapter after chapter, from the Library to the Theatre, is very obvious. This difficulty I experienced in my Play of “*The Iron Chest*,” taken from the very interesting Novel call’d “*Caleb Williams* ;”—and, after much cudgelling of my brains, I abandon’d the task, in great measure, as hopeless.—I follow’d some of the most prominent points, and mingled them with scenes of my own, whereby poor Caleb was greatly “curtail’d of his fair proportions ;” but I was overloaded with Mr. Godwin’s good things, and driven to relinquish a large portion of them*,

* I had nothing to do with the political tendency of the book ; which is thought, by many, to inculcate levelling principles, and disrespect for the Laws of our Country.

as sailors are sometimes obliged to lighten the ship, by throwing their valuables overboard.

As to the generality of Entertainments which have been manufactured, of late, from the popular Scotch Stories, they can hardly be class'd among dramattick writings. These crippled Iliads in a Nutshell are the *journeywork* of the Stage; in which scissors and paste predominate over pen and ink; consisting chiefly of huge passages cut out of the printed books, and fasten'd, in adhesive torture, together.—They are calculated, however, to please the million, and to be profitable to the *trade*.

I hope it will be understood that I do not mean to dogmatize, by laying down rules for others in the foregoing resolutions. They are only intended for myself, in case I should (as I trust I shall not) have any future occasion for them.—Were it possible that I could, in the days of my youth, have possessed my present experience, my resolution then would have been,—*Never to write for the Stage, if, by any other pursuit, I can obtain an honest gentleman's livelihood.*

Perhaps this avowal may be called affectation, or ingratitude, or both, since my dramattick attempts have been generally successful;—but I

beg to refer the reader, for my sentiments upon this head, to the third chapter of my first volume*.

“Time rolls his course;”—and Time, which has destroy’d mightier Triumvirates than a Club of Three Englishmen, soon broke up our Mess in King’s College. At the beginning of the year 1783, Mr. Earle migrated from Old Aberdeen to St. Andrews, to remain there with a juvenile friend, (connected with his family,) who had lately become a student in the University of that decay’d city;—and Mr. Perkins had, not long before, return’d to England.

I was, thus, left an extraneous animal, in a crowd of young scholastick Yahoos, as forlorn as a fashionable “Last Man,” when all belonging to the *beau monde*, but himself, have quitted London†.

For about a week, or ten days, I breakfasted, dined, and supp’d, solitarily in my apartments; and, when I walk’d out for exercise, as I never mix’d with the undergraduates of our fraternity, we pass’d each other in greater silence than the Monks

* See pages 62 and 63.

† A clever *jeu d’esprit*, of several stanzas, upon the subject of a *Dandy* left in Town during the dog-days, has been printed in the “John Bull” Newspaper, under the title of “The Last Man.”

of La Trappe, without so much as that least cheering of all social salutations, "*Memento mori*!"

Even Geordy, my serving-man and fellow pedestrian, who might have broken the silence of my solitude, now and then, while attending me, was no longer in my pay. I had cashier'd him for listening on the outside of my room-door; an amusement in which, it seems, he indulged, whenever any body was conversing with me. This was imparted to me, by an *informer*;—One evening, therefore, while *tête à tête* with one of my english friends, I bolted out suddenly, and caught the curious Geordy in the very act, with his ear at the key-hole. After his instantaneous expulsion, a world of his mal-practices came to light, and I found that the knave had been "feeding fat" upon me*.

* "I will *feed fat* the ancient grudge I owe him."

Shakspeare's Merchant of Venice.

On Geordy's disgrace, I took a good-natured honest lad to succeed him, who was not calculated to become a useful domestick, since "*the Gods had made him poetical*." I retain'd him but a short time, and we parted, I forget precisely when, how, or why. Some years afterwards, I saw him in London, whither he had travell'd, as a trader, I believe, to the *Mart of Genius*. He publish'd some sonnets, and similar prettinesses, with his name to them, in the Newspapers, and other fugitive prints;—but, not proving a second Burns, he has remain'd in obscurity.

Retracing my way across the Tweed, or ceasing to be, *nominally at least*, a Student in Old Aberdeen, were measures which I durst not adopt without the parental permission ;—but, heartily sick of moping alone*, I determined on a change of scene ;—a change which, considering that I was order'd down to live in a College, under the control of a Tutor, was effected by means very inconsistent with filial obedience, or academick subordination.

My first object was to march out of my old melancholy quarters, my second, never to march back again ; — I, therefore, stripp'd the walls, and employ'd an auctioneer to sell off my furniture, of which the reader has already been presented with a Catalogue. I have stated the proceeds of the *Roup*† to have fallen a little short of Nine Pounds ;—a sum rather of the smallest for all the household effects of a gentleman giving up his establishment ;—but I doubt whether my worthy and florid friend, Mr. George Robins himself, whose eloquence enhances the value of mansions and moveables, (and who

* I might have written the last act of my Play during this time,—but I was disinclined,—or the Muse would not come.

† Auction.

knocks down most of the aristocratical property for sale, in Town and Country,) could have charm'd his hearers into bidding one halfpenny more, for my goods and chattels.

With all the precious drops I could distill from my chairs and tables,—that is, with eight pounds, nineteen shillings and sixpence, in my pocket,—in addition to about a moiety remaining of my last Christmas allowance,—I started, about the end of February, in the Diligence, for Montrose : The reader may recollect my having mention'd it as a cheerful town ;—and, when I pass'd through it, in the summer, I might have been tempted to make a day or two's stay, if I had not been press'd for time, by being nearly press'd into the sea-service.

Little or no ceremony was requisite in apprizing Rory Macleod of my movements ;—he was used to my excursions, and did not trouble himself, or me, about their duration ;—he was sure, at all events, that I should turn up again on *quarter-day*, or, indeed, some time before it. As to my becoming so complete a non-resident at the University,—I attended no lectures,—I observed no rules, if there were any to enforce ;—my private tutor was little more than my paymaster,

and his pupil merely a lodger in a College ;—therefore, whether I sojourn'd in one scotch town or another,—*Thebis an Argis*,—(provided the place were *cheap*)—was of small importance to honest Rory.

LUCRETIVS gives us four lines to the following purport :

“ How sweet it is, when snug on shore, to view
A heaving vessel's tempest-driven Crew,—
Grim Death around them glaring !—
Not that 'tis sweet, to see poor fellows drown'd,
But vastly pleasant to be safe and sound,
While others are despairing*.”

The poet seems to derive this sentiment from principles of mere self-love ; but he might (had he not been an atheistical Epicurean) have traced it to the better source of gratitude to Providence, for sparing us from calamities which are inflicted upon men less fortunate than ourselves.—Let the feeling arise as it may, the sensation produced by reviewing scenes of our own discomforts (when those discomforts no longer exist) is in some degree allied to it ; though it does not ren-

“ Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem ;
Non quia vexari quemquam est jucunda voluptas,
Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.”

LUCRETIVS ; *lib. sec.*

der us suspected of wanting compassion for our neighbours :—and this sensation I experienced while travelling in a carriage over the very same ground which I had *footed*, a few months before, in almost as much misery as Hassan crossing the desert*.

Each hillock and block of stone, by the roadside, which I had made my resting-place,—each hovel where its humble tenant had offer'd me refreshments,—was an object of interest to me ;—and I constantly thrust my head out of the Diligence to contemplate it ; much to the annoyance of an asthmatick north-briton, shut up with me in the “ leathern convenience ;” who, as often as I let down the window,—and thereby let in a sharp frost,—wheezed most piteously.—I half apologized, at last, by saying that I had hoped a little fresh air might not be disagreeable to him ;—“ troth sir,” said he, “ a cutting east-wind is nae just the best remedy for my disorder ;”—he then began to complain of the slow progress we made, in such bitter cold weather :—I observed to him, that, we had but a pair of horses, and that one of them was either broken-

* See COLLINS'S *Oriental Eclogues*.

winded or a *roarer*;—"then, sir," he answer'd, "I pity the puir beastie; for 'tis ten lang winters that I hae been a roarer mysen." This led him to the history of his having laid the foundation of his disease by catching cold upon cold, in a scrupulous attention to his duties, as Organist of an ill-air'd church,—where, no doubt, he had a regular inflating assistant;—but, poor man! for his own impair'd organism there was no bellows-blower but himself,—and sad work he made of it!

MATHEWS—"whose eye begets occasion for his wit"—once told me of his going a day's journey with an asthmatick passenger, not dangerously ill, although muffled up in a night-cap and flannels, who never attempted to utter, except when the Stage stopp'd at an Inn; but at every house of call where the waiter came to the coach-door with the usual "please to 'light, gemmen," the gasping invalid breathed out to him, as well as he could,—"*butter-milk*."—The pen can produce no effect from so simple an incident;—but Mathews, with one touch of his extraordinary talent, can give you the very man,—can present him to your eyes and ears, stuck up in the corner of a

coach, and *butter-milking* it, to the very life ;— 'tis one of those portraits (with the addition of vocal resemblance) which you would swear must be like, although you never saw the original ;—humourous as a sketch by Hogarth, chaste as a picture by Wilkie.

Arrived once more at Montrose, where I was dropt by the Organist, who proceeded further south, I procured a first floor, comfortably furnish'd, in the dwelling-house of a small and (strange to say) *lively* family of QUAKERS. It stood on the south-east edge of the town,—which is on the edge of the *Links**,—which, again, are on the edge of the German Ocean ;—so that, altogether, I edged myself into very good quarters.

Friend Aminadab, my landlord, was a remarkably fat specimen of the Faithful ;—the Society of Jumpers would never have suited him ;—but his wife was a spare little woman, who certainly did

* THE LINKS are tracts of green-sward adjoining the sea-shore. "GOLF; the name of a diversion or exercise, much used in Scotland, and play'd upon the lawns, or *links*, as they are there call'd. It consists in driving a ball with clubs, between two goals, or 'holes, half a mile or a mile asunder. He who can do this with the fewest strokes of his club is the conqueror."

Chambers's Cyclopædia.

not look like his *better half*, and might much more properly be call'd "bone of his bone" than "flesh of his flesh." They appear'd to have number'd nearly three score years apiece; and had retired from trade upon a competence which made them happy;—or, if it did not, their countenances belied them;—for the husband's ample physiognomy beam'd with pleasantness, like a harvest moon at the full, while calm content sat smiling on the matronly features of his spouse.

Children in the humbler ranks of life soon quit their parents, for they must go forth to earn their bread. Whatever, therefore, might have been the brood of this ancient pair of turtles, their nestlings were rear'd, and had flown, long ago:—but the old man and woman employ'd "twa bonnie lasses" of their own sect, as maid-servants; who kept the apartments accurately clean; and, when their work was done, enliven'd the house (at least I thought so, at the distance of the first floor from the kitchen,) by singing scotch songs and duets to the twirl of their spinning-wheels.

In short, the inhabitants of the dwelling were as cheerful as the view from their windows.—Of

course, they adhered to *Thee* and *Thou*,—and they were all *brown*,—that is in respect to their outward garments ;—and Aminadab wore his broad brimm'd beaver,—and his Dame look'd very smug in her close cap,—and the Maids look'd very pretty in theirs ;—but their manners had not the buckram of Quakerism,—there was no ostentation of formality or sedateness ;—and, above all, they were vastly obliging and attentive to the first-floor lodger.

I had brought nothing with me from the Library of King's College, except a Homer and a Lexicon, that I might still rub on with my Greek ;—but among the articles in my sitting-room, I found, greatly to my surprise, much the same collection of english volumes, both as to quality and quantity, as was placed in the Inn at Laurence Kirk. The volumes, too, were display'd in exactly the same kind of repository,—a glazed mahogany case, dapperly perch'd upon the top of a bureau.

With this windfall of books for light reading, Homer for a study, my own scribbling for a hobby-horse, a few acquaintances which I had made among respectable inhabitants of the town,

and the Officers quarter'd there,—I had wherewithal either to improve time or to waste it, in Montrose.

Here, then, I remain'd stationary for three months; bating one trip to Rory Macleod, in March, to receive my *quarterage*, and hear his wonted dissertation upon economy;—here I wrote the last act of “*Two to One*,” and forwarded the Play to my father, who accepted it for representation at his theatre;—here, also, I did not fail to revisit the Fisherman's Widow, who had been so hospitable to me; and had screen'd me from persons exercising the only FREEDOM OF THE PRESS which is unpopular,—for, instead of maintaining English Liberty, it takes away that birth-right of the subject.

The abruptness of my unexpected return, (and in a *new character*,) beneath the Widow's humble roof, almost overpower'd her with surprise. She recognized my features immediately, but not my person;—bewilder'd by the great alteration in my dress, and my *degree*, her joy in again beholding the semblance of her perish'd son was check'd by doubt of my identity, and respect for my present appearance.—Was it possible that the young

english gentleman, then before her, could be the way-faring soldier of a highland regiment, for whom she had procured a passage in the *Collier*? She view'd me eagerly, though diffidently, with an inquiring smile of mingled pain and pleasure;—it was one of those looks which belong only to simple Nature's unsophisticated children, and express, at once, all the flutter'd feelings of a perplex'd and anxious heart.

The mystery was now to be solved;—and, having briefly unravell'd it, I begg'd her still to continue on the same terms with me as with the *soldier laddie*,—the likeness of her “darling Willie.”—At the mention of her lost boy, and my resemblance to him, the poor soul grasp'd the hand I held out to her, while tears were glistening in her eyes;—and, after a fruitless struggle to speak,—she leant her head upon my shoulder, and sobb'd aloud.

Frequent were my calls at this worthy creature's cabin, during my stay at Montrose;—earnestly, too, would she listen to the important nothings which had occur'd in my day's voyage with her relation, the *guardian coalheaver*,—and which she made me repeat, over and over again: Nor did any thing ever ruffle the smooth current

of our intercourse, but her constant refusal of money, as a token of the gratitude I owed her :—we, then, indeed, would bicker ;—but it was a friendly warfare,—and ended, after many skirmishes, in a compromise, by her acceptance of some household linen, both for bed and board, which I knew would be of use to her.

Three months had pass'd, when it came into my head, I know not how,—unless Homer's lofty song of Troy besieged, and Heroes slaughter'd, had brought it there,—to obtain a general knowledge of Ancient History ;—this required, besides the regular perusal of certain historians, a variety of references to other authors, to maps, &c. &c.—My immediate residence afforded no facilities for such a research,—King's College did :—I was still indulged with leave to borrow books from its Library ;—though not allow'd to transport my loans in the quantities I wanted, to a distance of about thirty-eight miles ; and as the mountain could not come to Mahomet, (not that I presume to compare myself with that Illustrious Conjuror,) Mahomet determin'd to go to the mountain. I bade adieu, therefore, to my lively Quakers ; went back,—not to my old rooms, for I had dismantled

their walls,—but to their vicinity ;—and, at the end of May, settled myself in *New Aberdeen*, where I had several acquaintances.

Verily, friend Aminadab's habitation was a "pleasant place," and it spoil'd me for dwelling in the heart of cities ;—wherefore, on quitting his apartments, to take up my abode as above-mention'd, I was desirous of obtaining lodgings as similar, in point of situation, to those I had just relinquish'd, as possible. I could meet with nothing of this sort exactly answerable to my wish ;—the nearest to the mark was a cottage on the skirts of the New Town, where rooms to let had been a great while unoccupied, and were likely to remain so, a great while longer ;—and for an appalling reason,—the house was *haunted* ! —But this drawback upon domestick quiet was counterbalanced by a material advantage,—the Apparition (there was but *one*) had considerably *lower'd the rent* ;—and what is one solitary Spectre, in a neatly furnish'd tenement, when the best rooms in it are to be had dog-cheap ?—I consulted Rory Macleod on the subject, who advised me to strike a bargain for the apartments, without delay, which I did, accordingly. I had just left a family

of Quakers ; and it was indifferent to me whether people with whom I resided were moved by the Spirit, or disturb'd by a Ghost.

As every Ghost has its peculiar and distinct mysteries, it may be better to explain matters a little minutely.

The house, in which I lodged, appertain'd to one of those marine Carriers, calling themselves Captains, whose business it is, to keep a vessel in the alternate states of plethora and depletion ;—and he was perpetually lading and unlading his floating Stage-Waggon, for the transportation of all sorts of goods, at various ports ;—but his chief voyages were, I believe, to Russia.

On the homeward-bound passage from St. Petersburg, his Ship's-Carpenter got drunk one night, tumbled into the sea, and was drown'd ;—and as a Carpenter does not possess the same buoyancy as the substances on which he goes to work, the odds were that when he had reach'd the bottom of the Baltick, he would not come up again, and swim to Scotland :—But, in this instance, the knowing ones were taken in ; for, when the Captain landed at New Aberdeen, his family ran open-mouth'd

to him, on the Quay, and astounded him with the news that the Carpenter had got home a considerable time before him ;—that he danced on the floor of the empty garret, in the dead of the night, with his bag of tools at his back, and hammer'd, at short intervals, from twelve o'clock till dawn. Those who asserted this terrifying fact must, doubtless, have peep'd at him through the key-hole ;—and they moreover affirm'd, after a comparison of dates, that the first performance of his *pas seul* was on the very night he was drown'd. It cannot, indeed, be said, as of Hamlet's father, that the "Sepulchre" had "given him up," for he had never been buried ;—but by all the laws of legends, and preternaturals, he was as good, downright, and orthodox, a Ship's Carpenter's Ghost, as ever revisited the glimpses of the moon ;—had he happen'd to fall into the Red Sea, instead of the Baltick, it must, infallibly, have *laid* him.

In respect to the Captain's abode, its locality, and its inhabitants,—the House itself was not very unlike some of those jemmy Boxes fitted up as Villas by minor tradesmen, in the environs of

London,—those dear little *Honeysuckle Halls*, and *Rosebud Lodges*.—It had a garden before it of a few feet square, fenced with trellis work ;—inside were two parlours on the ground-floor ;—each of these had a smaller room behind them,—further back, a bedroom for one of the family, close to the kitchen, pantry, scullery, &c. &c.—over all these, nothing but garrets.—Be it remember'd, too,—pardon me, my good reader, I must be precise in my description, for it has a bearing upon the Ghost ;—Be it remember'd then, that the house was completely insulated, standing in front of a road, over which (being only a by-lane to the *Links* *) a carriage, or even a horseman, or pedestrian, very seldom pass'd ;—on one side, and a furlong off, were the north-eastern extremities of New Aberdeen ;—on the other, an open field or two, adjoining the aforesaid Links ;—at the back, but at a respectful distance, was a Cow-house.

The inhabitants were,—the Captain, when return'd from a voyage ;—his niece, tall and straight ;—a male relation, short and hump-back'd ;

* See the previous Note upon this word.

and a maid-servant. The niece acted as house-keeper ; but the crooked kinsman, who follow'd some trade in the town, was never at home, (Sundays excepted) till dusk. I occupied one of the parlours, and the room behind it,—sitting in the first, and sleeping in the latter ;—the counterpart of these rooms the Captain reserved for himself ;—the niece slept near the kitchen ; the maid servant in one of the front garrets ; *Humpty* in another ; and the empty garret,—where the Ghost hammer'd and danced,—was exactly over my bedchamber.

On the first night of entering the lodgings, as my habits were tolerably early, I went to bed half an hour before “the witching time of night, when church-yards yawn.” I was between sleeping and waking, and the melancholy eight-day clock, in the Captain's parlour, was striking twelve, when—hark !—the punctual Ghost startled me by so decided and solemn a thump, on the garret floor, that he seem'd to say, “You are a new lodger, and I must give you a hearty welcome.”—The sound resembled that of a sledge hammer striking upon an anvil, but as if both hammer and anvil were muffled ;—dull, dismal, and

heavy,—so heavy indeed, that it made the poker and tongs rattle in the fireplace. Soon after the first blow came a second,—and another, and another,—then one not so loud,—then several in quick succession ;—by and by, the shuffling of feet, or the *dancing* ;—and so on, more or less, till day-break ;—in short, it kept me all night awake, quoting from one of old Dibdin's songs—"The Devil take the Carpenter !"

Having been told that I was to expect something of this kind, and the lodgings being cheap in consequence, I had, perhaps, no great right to complain ; the nuisance, however, had been palliated, by the niece who let the apartments ; and when, instead of the gentle raps and taps, as she had described them, there came such a confounded thunderstorm of thumps, directly over my head, I could not help thinking that, in comparison with the rent, the *row* was too great, by at least half a crown a week.

Night after night, the disturbance continued ;—though with different degrees of violence : but the proverb of familiarity breeding contempt applies as well to the dead as to the quick ;——whence it happens, that, having a Ghost for a

fellow-lodger is much the same as living next doot to a Trunk-maker,—he annoys you terribly at first, but, after a little time, you take no notice of him :—still there was quite enough to excite curiosity, and nobody likes to give up a riddle.

I suspected a hoax, and that the *Bossu*, whom I have mention'd as a male relation, was the hoaxer ;—but this was a mistake, for poor little Crook-back turn'd out to be a rank coward ; and so far from shamming a Ghost, would have fled like an arrow (though looking like the bow) to avoid one.—One night, for instance, while the Carpenter was more busy than usual, I stole softly up stairs to the empty garret, and kick'd open the door,—a process easily effected, as the wood-work was slight and the lock bad :—At the moment after the bounce which the forcing of this barrier occasion'd, my ears were assail'd by a deep groan !—All was silent when I got into the room, all was silent till I came out ;—and the candle in my hand would have enabled me to see anybody, if there had been anybody there to be seen ;—but there was neither flesh, blood, nor spirit,—neither hoaxer, nor Carpenter, nor Carpenter's tools, nor his shadow ;—there was my own

shadow against the naked walls, and nothing else—nothing but an unfurnish'd garret, and the window screw'd down in the inside.

Previously to returning down stairs, I gave three very hard slaps, with my open hand, against the chamber door adjoining to that which was haunted,—when the agonized Humpy, who lay there, sent forth a hideous shriek, as if all the Screech-owls in *Der Freischütz* had been in his stomach.—It convinced me that he was no practical joker ; and that he had been listening in his bed to the extra noises of that fearful and particular night,

“ Distill'd almost to jelly with his fear.”

It, then, also, occur'd to me, that, the deep groan above-mention'd must have come from the same quarter.—Next morning, little *Æsop* *fabled* greatly, about all the clatter he had heard ;—exaggerating much, and inventing more ;—and, on the succeeding night, the Carpenter laid it on thicker, to express his anger at the liberty I had taken with his work-shop.

Thoroughly convinced, at last, that neither Humpy nor any of the family were playing tricks,

I, nevertheless, held it to be highly improbable, if not impossible, from the situation of the Captain's house, (which I have endeavour'd to describe accurately,) that noises could be convey'd into it by external accident, or design ;—at least, such noises as hammering and dancing,—lasting all night, and every night,—and all concentrated in the back garret.

The road in front, be pleased to recollect, and the grounds behind it, were unfrequented and uninhabited ;—so was the tract, on one side ;—on the other side, the nearest dwellings on the skirts of the New Town, were too remote to be brought into question.—The Cow-house, in the rear,—though even that was detach'd, and many yards apart,—seem'd to be the only spot from which an auricular illusion was at all likely to proceed ;—that place, therefore, was to be search'd ;—but I was as doubtful of discovering anything there, to advance the *theory of sounds*, as I was certain that the term *acousticks* (whatever mere english readers may think) is not derived from a *cow-house*.

Well,—this repository for cattle was explored, once, twice, and thrice ;—at times, too, when the

Carpenter was in high force, and raging his utmost ;—but no cattle, or cattle-keepers, were to be found there ;—no cow, bull, ox, nor ass, nor any animal, brute or human. Thus, then, the affair remain'd *in statu quo*, and the hammering and dancing went on, involved in mystery ; and so it may be going on at this very day, provided the House be standing, and the Ghost indefatigable.

That, in these our times, strange effects arise only from natural causes ;—that amphibious Carpenters, drown'd past all help from the Humane Society, never do posthumous jobs in a garret ;—that a Spectre, now, neglects his nocturnal duty rather more, if possible, than a Watchman,—are points upon which I have fully made up my mind : —But the foregoing Wonder of Wonders is one of those Gordian-knots which tighten the tethers of Superstition, and which reason and research have not been able to untie.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

“ Vides ut

Nudus inopsq. domum redeam.”

HORACE.

“ ‘ You have been in France?’ said my gentleman.”—

STERNE.

“ Knowledge in Law care only can attain,
For Honour’s purchased at the price of Pain.—
Where’er the Muse usurps despotick sway,
All other Studies must, of force, give way;
Int’rest in vain puts in her proudest claim,
Nonsuited by the pow’rful plea of Fame.”

LLOYD.

ANCIENT History and the Ghost were the two chief objects of my inquiry, during the summer of this year (1783);—and the few deciduous leaves had fallen which an Aberdeen Autumn has to drop, when I received a most welcome letter from my father, to recall me from my banishment. My instructions were, not to return to London instantly, but to be in Soho Square at the approaching Christmas; I determined, therefore, as it was then the beginning of November, to go to

Edinburgh towards the end of the month, to stay there about three weeks, and then to proceed on my journey home.

Since Aberdeen (considering both towns as one) had always appear'd to me a seat of exile, and a region of duilness, I did not anticipate the regret I experienced on the morning of my departure from it;—but, such is the force of habit, and the caprice of human nature, that, after having lived for a length of time in the place,—where I had been grumbling, day after day, at every thing and every body,—I could not help feeling a momentary pensiveness on quitting the old spot,—and quitting it, in all probability, for ever. Shaking hands with honest Rory Macleod, —who, though too little of a disciplinarian, and too much of an economist, meant well, and had a truly kind heart,—was a painful leave-taking;—the very streets, as I drove off in a post-chaise, and look'd at the buildings for the last time, inspired me with an interest which they had never excited before; and those individual Aberdeennites, with whom I had form'd an acquaintance, floated in my mind, with all their best qualities on the surface.

On summing up time lost and improved, during both my actual and nominal residence in Aberdeen, I flatter'd myself that I had wasted less than might have been expected, from one so flighty, and indolent as myself.

While a Member of King's College, I had voluntarily acquired a much larger portion of classical knowledge in two years, and a "wee bit," as the Scotch say, than I had compulsively been taught in more than five times two, at Marybone, Westminster, and Oxford. My Reading, therefore, was so much time improved;—as to my Writing, I might be puzzled to say on which side of the account it should be placed, if it had not eventually been the foundation of a trade for me, (though I might have found a much better than that of a Dramatist,) which I have, often, exercised to advantage, in point of mere money;—and, if that had fail'd, I had gain'd something else,—for by privilege of my Freedom of the City of New Aberdeen, I may return there, and *set up a shop*, whenever I please. A further gain, too,—which I had forgot, but the word Freedom has put me in mind of it,—was my initiation into the craft of Free-Masonry,—that grand Arcanum which is

confided to thousands, all over the world; and has thereby become, as Lingo would call it, “a secret *pro bono publico*.”

It appears that I valued the honours of the New-Town Lodge above those of the Old Town University; for I was proud of being raised to the rank of a Master Mason; but when King’s College complimented me with the offer of a Master of Arts’ degree,—I *declined* it.

Things fall out, and things fall down;—and, among other chances, and mischances, there happen’d to be a heavy fall of snow a few days before I should have gone to London;—in consequence of which, (as a Scotch fall of snow, like a Scotch *man*, is remarkable for perseverance,) my stay at Edinburgh was protracted till late in January.

At last, I set out in the first Diligence which started on the experiment of effecting a passage;—it had six horses, and three postillions, instead of the customary pair, and a coachman. When I enter’d the vehicle, before daybreak, with a scotch terrier, there was a very corpulent American who had already taken possession of his seat, on his return, *viâ* London, to Boston.—He “*guess’d*” we should have a disagreeable journey, and I was

sure of it.—The postboys kept the road whenever they could find it, or thought it tolerably safe; but in the hollows, where the snow had drifted, they abandon'd it for the fields;—the riders and their horses were continually rolling and tumbling about,—both men and beasts in danger of being smother'd; while I and my dog, and the fat Yankee, were toss'd up and down, in the Dilly, worse than passengers weathering a gale in the Bay of Biscay. Our progress was extremely unpleasant; and all was *white* as far as the dazzled eye could stretch, till we had penetrated into England, many miles beyond the Scottish Borders;—after which the depth of snow gradually decreased, and from Morpeth, southward, there was no difficulty.

We reach'd Newcastle about midnight,—a tolerably tedious pull, from four o'clock, A. M. of the preceding day, through such a country as we had pass'd, and in such a season.—Here I went to bed immediately, having, according to stage-coach regulations, only four or five hours to rest.—I rested *twelve*;—and, when I got up, at noon, was told, of course, that the Diligence had departed,—leaving me and my terrier behind, and bearing off the fat American.

As the remittance for my travelling expenses, sent to me from the Hay-Market Treasurer, was more ample than it might have been if coming directly from the Manager himself, I could afford to chuse my own mode of conveyance: I continued my route, therefore, from Newcastle to London, in post-chaises ;—delighted to revisit my native land, and doubly enjoying its polish'd prospects, in contrast with the rugged scenèry from which I had just been emancipated ;—thinking, too, with all due deference to the splendid products of the quarry, that the sight of a comfortable english *brick* village was quite refreshing, after many of the melancholy stone-built towns in Scotland.

My father welcomed me to Soho Square in the full flow of his kindness ;—but it *ebb'd* a little, on the morning after my arrival, when the House-keeper expounded to him the lamentable contents of “ Mr. George Colman’s small travelling trunk ;” —which threaten’d an immediate call upon the parental purse, to furnish raiment for the prodigal return’d. The careful dame had set down, upon a small scrap of paper, all that the trunk con-

tain'd ; but the list was almost as meagre as Prince Harry's inventory of Poins's wardrobe* : each article enumerated had seen so much service, that there was no saying of them, according to the consoling apophthegm, " when things are at the worst, they will *mend* ;"—yet so few were they in number, they seem'd to corroborate the opinion of Goldsmith's Hermit, that,

“ Man wants but little here below.”

The fact is, that, foreseeing the term of my banishment must soon expire, and having (spite of Rory Macleod's economical advice) quite calls enough upon my quarterly allowance, without the charges for apparel, I had latterly suffer'd both my linen and woollen to diminish and decay ;—trusting to what actually happen'd,—a complete *Fit-Out*, on my return to London, at my father's cost.

When fully and fashionably equipp'd, I had,

* “ What a disgrace is it to me to remember thy name ? or to know thy face to-morrow ? or to take note how many pair of silk stockings thou hast ; *viz.* these, and those that were the peach-colour'd ones ? or to bear the inventory of thy shirts ; as one for superfluity and one other for use ?”

Shakspeare's Henry the 4th, 2d part.

during this winter, only to do what many well dress'd young gentlemen (and not a few old ones) did in that day, and do in the present,—*videlicet*, nothing at all;—unless the occupations of a lounging man of pleasure, in London, may be call'd something. I devoted, indeed, some part of every morning to reading, for which my father's library afforded me excellent opportunities.

Parliament was dissolved, early in the Spring, when, of course, the whole Country was agitated by a General Election;—and from the first of April, (a fit day to begin fooling the electors,) till May was far advanced, the contest between Lord Hood, Mr. Fox, and Sir Cecil Wray, kept the City of Westminster in constant confusion.

My father, who busied himself no further in national politicks than to apply them profitably, when he could, to the politicks of his playhouse, open'd his theatre, this year, with a Prelude of his own writing, call'd “The Election of the Managers;” of which the *Biographia Dramatica* speaks as follows:—

“This piece was produced at the time of” [immediately after] “a general election; and obtain'd applause more by temporary allusions to

the then election for Westminster, than by any merit in itself. It was at first refused a license ; but some exceptionable passages having been omitted, it pass'd the Lord Chamberlain. The character of the well-known Sam House* was introduced and well personated by Mr. Edwin."

That the piece, written in haste for the occasion, was beneath the talents of the Author of *The Jealous Wife*, cannot be denied;—it must, also, be admitted that its personalities, though sportive and without malice, were quite enough to pose an official examiner of Plays, in respect to the propriety of its representation ;—and personal allusions, if admitted upon the Stage, are not likely, without pungent wit, or humour, to be very successful. A couple of female characters were introduced among the *dramatis personæ* of this Prelude, evidently meant for portraits of two Ladies in High Life, who had made themselves conspicuous at the Westminster Election, as partisans in opposite interests ;—the first, a beautiful Duchess,

* A noted Publican of Wardour Street, and an enthusiastick supporter of Mr. Fox's interests, at the election. His dress (or rather undress) was very remarkable ; to which Edwin closely adhered, in his personation of him.

universally admired and respected;—the second, an untitled lady, at that time, but afterwards a Countess, in consequence of her husband having succeeded to an Earldom. These were personated by Miss Farren and Mrs. Webb,—not, perhaps, only because they were popular actresses, but, also, from their figures bearing some resemblance to the originals,—*at* whom they were dress'd, though not so pointedly as Edwin at Sam House.—The Prelude was well received, and went on smoothly, for several nights, when an unexpected storm arose.—A Mr. Bob Monckton, a Buck, (a fat one, too,) of that era,—son to General Monckton of Quebec memory, whose figure stands prominent in West's picture of the Death of General Wolfe,—came, night after night, into a Stage-box, to hiss, hoot, and cry “Off, Off,” till he was as hoarse as a raven. This idle young gentleman, it was thought, hooted and croak'd from no motive but mere wantonness;—however, as one foe, like one fool, makes many, he excited a formidable opposition to the Piece;—it was, thus, check'd in its career, and soon laid aside.

No matter, now, whether this trifle (for it was a trifle at best) were good, bad, or indifferent;—

but who should have been the persons to condemn it, is a separate question ;—and it is surprising to find, in the various periods of our stage-history, a host of Dramatists persevering in their vocation, undeterr'd and undisgusted by a herd of Bob Moncktons.—I am not discussing, here, the qualifications of theatrical audiences in general ; I only mean to infer, that, in so large a body, there are (and naturally must be) many very unfavourable specimens of that Hydra which has obtain'd, from those whose bread depends upon it, the adulatory title of “ The Candid and Discerning Publick ; ”—and that the turbulence of spitchful, or frolicksome, or foolish, fellows, has too often caused the failure of Dramas which havè deserved a better fate.

But my own trial was approaching,—and on the nineteenth of June my first Play (intended to have been produced in the previous summer) was brought forward.

The Piece was introduced by an excellent Prologue from my father ; the allusions in it to the parent bird leading forth its young one, and to Dædalus and Icarus, were happily imagined, and as happily express'd,—and were, to *me*, very touching.—

In the brief interval between the Prologue and the beginning of the Play, I press'd my father's hand, and thank'd him ;—my spirits were afloat,—and he, old Stager though he was, appear'd so much affected by my manner, that I—in short, I could not help shedding a few tears ;—it may be ridiculous, perhaps, to mention it here ; but let those laugh who may,—I do not envy them their feelings.

On second thoughts, as the Prologue is, now, in few hands, it may not be unwelcome to my readers, in general ;—I, therefore, introduce it, here.

PROLOGUE TO THE COMEDY OF TWO TO ONE ;

SPOKEN by MR. PALMER.

To-night, as Heralds tell, a virgin Muse,
An untrain'd Youth, a new Adventurer, sues ;
Green in his One and Twenty, scarce of age,
Takes his first flight, half fledged, upon the Stage.
Within this little round, the Parent Bird
Hath warbled oft ; oft patiently you heard ;
And, as he strove to raise his eager throat,
Your kind applause made musick of his note.
But, now, with beating heart, and anxious eye,
He sees his venturous Youngling strive to fly ;

Like Dædalus, a Father's fears he brings,—
A Father's hopes,—and fain would plume his wings.
How vain, alas, his hopes! his fears how vain!
'Tis You must hear, and, hearing, judge the strain.
Your equal Justice sinks or lifts his name;
Your Frown 's a Sentence, your Applause is Fame.
If Humour warm his Scenes with genial fire,
They'll e'en redeem the errors of his Sire;
Nor shall his Lead—dead to the bottom drop,
By Youth's enlivening Cork buoy'd up at top.
If Characters are mark'd with ease and truth,
Pleased with his spirit, you'll forgive his youth;
Should 'Sire and Son be both with Dulness curst
“And Dunce the Second follow Dunce the First,”
The shallow Stripling's vain attempt you'll mock,
And damn him, for a Chip of the Old Block.

Puffs at the bottom of Play-Bills had not, then, arrived at their perfection;—otherwise it would have been announced, that, “the Musical Comedy of *Two to One*, having been received with unanimous and enthusiastick applause, would be repeated every evening, 'till further notice: Not an Order to be admitted.”—Its success, however, and its run, were enough to satisfy my vanity, of which I had, at that time, a very superfluous share.

Next morning (Sunday) brought in a day of rain :—but wet weather could not damp my resolution of sallying forth to *show myself*,—Myself, the Author of 'Two to One, whose fame had been establish'd, in the British Dominions, on the preceding night, by a Great House in the Little Theatre.—Now, by the Gods ! there is a pleasure in being a very great young Coxcomb which none but Young Coxcombs know !—it is delightful to be intoxicated with the ether of conceit, and not to feel what an ass you are making of yourself.

I had trudged for an hour under an umbrella, in the dirt and drizzle, before I recollected that my acquaintances in Town were few, and that those few would not walk about in the rain upon the chance of falling in my way, to greet me on my triumphs. Nobody fish'd harder for compliments, and I got but one congratulatory bite during the day,—this was from *Frank North**,—to whom I had never spoken ; but, knowing me by sight, he said, as he pass'd me in St. James's Street, " Mr. Colman, allow me to wish you joy ; "

* Afterwards Earl of Guilford ; he was second son of the then Lord North, the Prime Minister.

—and never could any man wish me joy whose countenance and conversation were better calculated to inspire it.

Soon after this, we were introduced to each other ;—his convivial wit, his flow of humour, his honourable principles, and his open generosity of heart, are too well known to require my record of them.—I enjoy'd his intimate friendship for many years, and our mutual regard remain'd unbroken, and undiminish'd, to the hour of his much lamented death. The loss of so dear a friend was a shock from which I could not soon recover, and I contemplate his memory with the sincerest affection.

Novelties, in this season at the Hay-Market, which follow'd Two to One, were,—The Mogul Tale, Lord Russel, Hunt the Slipper, The Noble Peasant, The Two Connoisseurs, and Peeping Tom.

The Mogul Tale, which turn'd upon the new invention of Balloons,—those ingenious inutilities which were, then, the rage,—was Mrs. Inchbald's first production,—*publick* one, I mean,—of which that fair lady was happily deliver'd ; and her subsequent literary progeny have done great

honour to their now deceased Mamma. Parsons's performance in this Piece of the chief character (a Cocker) was excellent. *Hunt the Slipper*, a Farce, by a Clergyman, was, if we are to believe the *Biographia Dramatica*, "far from a dull piece;"—this is negative praise;—perhaps it stood like a half-way house between a heath and a forest,—as near to barrenness as to fertility.—*The Noble Peasant*, a *shelf'd* Comick Opera, by Holcroft, had some very pretty musick*. Hayley's Tragedy of *Lord Russel* is better suited to the closet than to the Stage; and his *Two Connoisseurs*, (a Comedy in *rhyme*), were not "Hayley *guilty*;" the constant clinking of the verses was tiresome. O'Keeffe's *Peeping Tom*, upon the ticklish ground of Lady Godiva, keeps the stage to this day;—it is below some other efforts of this very entertaining and eccentric author, but it is very pleasant;—its musick particularly so;—there has been no Peeping Tom equal to Edwin;—the nearest to him was Jack Bannister; and Bannister was admirable in many characters which Edwin could not touch.

* It was acted through the season, after an equivocal reception on its first night.

Near the end of August, I went to Paris, in consequence of an odd commutation of my father's design to send me into Switzerland for a year or two ; a plan which I then dreaded, and now regret that it was abandon'd ;—but, at that time, I consider'd Switzerland as another Scotland, and a sojournment there as a second exile. I could now be content and happy to repose for the remainder of my life, in any of its picturesque Cantons,—taking, however, my *fireside* with me ; regretting to leave some *very* few friends in England ; and trusting, for any other society, to the honest folks among the Alps*. But a counsellor or two, with whom I had some interest, in my father's Cabinet, represented to him my repugnance to the proposed scheme ; and it was arranged that I should take an excursion, for only a month or six weeks, into France,—to Paris, or any other place I pleased, among our Gallick neighbours,—and then return, to commence (I groan'd at the decree !) the toilsome study of *the Law*.

* I never read the account of Gibbon's house and garden, and his society at Lausanne, without wishing myself there.—See Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*, publish'd by the late Lord Sheffield.

Sending me across the Straits of Dover, for a six weeks' tour, seem'd to answer no other purpose than killing young Master's time, and draining Papa's pocket; but there was deeper policy in it than appears upon the surface. I had not yet sow'd my wild oats; and this *diversion* might serve to break off some London pursuits, which it was not advisable for me to continue.

To trust so flighty a youth *alone* upon this gay excursion, was held to be as unwise as suffering him to continue an idler in Town;—a person, therefore, was chosen for my fellow-traveller, in the middle capacity of guardian and companion :—this was an Old Officer in the Navy, who had stuck in a Lieutenancy for a sad number of years,—an intimate acquaintance of my father's, a favourite of mine,—a very poor, and a very honourable, gentleman. He volunteer'd going with me, and, as he had lived much in France, and was consequently supposed to be a proficient in the language, he was consider'd to be the very man for such a purpose;—he had even a Gallick kind of air about him;—but, when we got to Calais, I found that, however, he might have a french look, he had very little indeed of the french

tongue.—The first *échantillon* he gave me of his power to *parley voo* was immediately after our landing, when he roar'd out to the beggars who flock'd round us, "*Je vous donmy riang.*"—He was, besides, not at all a man of the world ; and, although it is not for me to say what sort of a Bear I might bè, I could scarcely have been danced by a more incompetent Leader. His good-nature, however, was inexhaustible ; and between my english-french and his jargon, we work'd our way up to Paris very sociably, and with little difficulty.—As to French, I found that I could talk it best *after dinner* : the polite natives always encourage a shy englishman to chatter, in spite of his blunders ;—" *il faut hazarder,*" they tell him ;—and when a risk is to be run, it is wonderful how their champagne, burgundy, and claret, screw up a man's courage !

Writing a description of Paris, and the Road to it, for the information of London Readers in the present century, would be much about as instructive as publishing a Tour to Piccadilly, through Turnham Green, Hammersmith, and Knightsbridge : and as no material events occur'd to me in this my maiden visit to the French Metropolis,

I shall leave most of my *mémoires français* to my second trip thither, which took place at a more momentous crisis ;—namely, at the period when the unhappy Louis Seize, with his Royal Family, was forced from Versailles by his affectionate subjects, who loved him so dearly, that they insisted upon his living among them at the Tuileries :—Still allow me to say a little before I go back to England.

Who but really long-sighted politicians, if such there be, could have anticipated, in this year of my first journey to France, (1784) the horrors which soon arose there ?—On going to the Opera, at Paris, in the last mention'd year, I found the house cramm'd, in consequence of Young Vestris's re-appearance after his imprisonment for having refused to dance, on some occasion, at the Queen's command. The loyal Parterre was so indignant at his contumacious conduct towards Majesty, that they insisted upon his asking pardon *upon his knees* ;—the young *Dieu de la Danse* did not, indeed, exactly obey this publick mandate ; for, after his many gesticulations of humility and contrition, the louder they call'd out “ *à genoux ! à genoux !* ” the higher he caper'd ;—but, in a very few years from this

time, the enthusiasts for arbitrary Monarchy confined the King and Queen virtually as prisoners in their own Metropolis ;—then dethroned them,—then actually incarcerated them,—and then cut off their heads* !

BEAUMARCHAIS had, just now, (I am still in 1784) bitten the Parisians, and they were all “ *Folle Journée*” mad. The translation of this Play, under the title of “ *The Follies of a Day; or the Marriage of Figaro*,” by Holcroft, was very well received at Covent Garden Theatre, in the same year. It has since been cut down to an after-piece, and is frequently perform’d in its reduced state.

My friend Reynolds, I find, saw this French piece, as I did, in its run at Paris ; I have, therefore, little to say about it, after the account given by so good a judge.—I agree with him, as to the perfect acting, and the personal charms, of the then fascinating *Contat* ; the Actress, too, who

* During their stay at the *Tuileries*, I saw Louis Seize and Marie-Antoinette, at Military Mass,—which, by the by, is something like taking Heaven by storm. The King look’d fat, and rather vacant, as if nothing had happen’d ;—the care-worn Queen was greatly alter’d since I had seen her at the Court of Versailles, on my first journey : she had grown very much thinner, and appear’d to be forcing a smile,—but it was “ snifling at grief.”

perform'd the Page (I forget her name) was very pretty, and very clever ; but I do not coincide with my friend when he says, “ *Molé*, though then sixty, look'd and perform'd the *Count* admirably :”—he look'd, in my eyes, a very respectable solid *sexagenaire* ; and I thought his figure, like his acting, much too heavy for the *rolage* *Almariva*.

Of this Actor we are told, in the *Anecdotes Dramatiques*,—“ *Molé*, Acteur de la Comédie Française, a débuté par les rôles de *Britannicus*, de *Séyd*, dans *Mahomet*, d' *Andronic*, et fut reçu en 1760. Il joue avec beaucoup d' intelligence, et de feu, dans les rôles tendres, soit Tragiques, soit Comiques.”—This account of *Molé* was publish'd in 1775 ;—and, however he might have improved between that time and 1784, (an interval of nine years,) Age does not much improve a man's *fire*, nor his looks, in the *rôles tendres* ; but, after all, *Almariva* can scarcely be class'd among the *tender lovers*,—unless the passion for *all woman-kind* be consider'd as tenderness.

There is a soliloquy in the above-mention'd Play, spoken by Figaro, which delighted the audience, and is nearly as long as some of our modern

sermons.—How comes it that Frenchmen, who are reckon'd a much more volatile nation than we are, not only tolerate, but admire, upon the Stage, long winded speeches, and listen eagerly to narratives, and declamations, which make sober John Bull either hiss or go to sleep?—I can only account for this paradox by their considering (as a light people are apt to do) their amusement to be matters of the utmost importance; and that they look upon every Play as a subject for grave study, while we go to see them chiefly for relaxation.

In regard to french acting,—I mean only *comick* acting,—the Italians and French seem to me to be altogether better gifted as performers than the English;—generally speaking, they are more actors by *nature*,—more vivacious,—less *gauche* in their deportment;—look at them in private life, even in the streets, and you are convinced of this.—They represent their Dramas *throughout* better than we do in England;—every performer's attention, individually and collectively, is engaged in the business of the scene, from beginning to end;—whereas many of our Actors cease to act the moment they have ceased

to utter.—In their provincial theatres, at least those which I have seen, their Plays are better *got up* (to use a technical term) than in most of our playhouses out of London ; and with none of those daubing mummers, and *walking-stick* lovers, whom we see in the country.

Now and then indeed, with all the graces and ease of french manners, we may find some examples of coarseness upon their Stage.—One night, at Lisle, I was at the representation of *Le Barbier de Seville*, in which a very pleasing and elegant lady perform'd the character of *Rosina* : After having seal'd a letter, she made two or three attempts to blow out a wax taper, when, proving unsuccessful, she extinguish'd the light *à force de CRACHER* : but this I attribute to the inconsistencies of her country, rather than to individual vulgarity in the performer,—for the audience, so far from being shock'd at the circumstance, took no notice of it whatever. It was only an instance of one of those anomalies observable in a nation so highly polish'd ;—a nation which made Sterne drollingly exclaim, when alluding to one of their very gross *apostrophes*, “ how my heart is wrung

with pity and fellow-feeling, when I reflect what miseries must have been their lot, and how bitterly so refined a people must have smarted, to have forced them upon the use of it*.”

For their Tragedies,—it is my humble opinion, (which will bring all french, and some english, Criticks upon my back,) that there is not one grain of true Nature, either in the Authors or Actors of them.

VOLTAIRE, who was always upon the very best terms with himself, writes as follows, to an *englishman*:—“Le Traducteur de *Zayre* (Voltaire’s own tragedy) a respecté presque partout ces *bienséances théâtrales* qui vous doivent être communes *comme à nous*.” He then finds some fault with (Aaron Hill) the translator; and very coolly concludes by saying,—“Vous devez, vous soumettre aux règles de *notre Théâtre*, comme nous devons embrasser votre Philosophie. Nous avons fait d’aussi bonnes expériences sur *le cœur humain*, que vous sur la Physique !”—The impudence of this is so contemptible, that it calls for no comment.

* See the SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY, under the head of “*The Bidet*.”

On our return from Paris,—I say *our*, for I must not forget my good-natured companion, who had so long been a Lieutenant run to seed, that he had shot up (more through the courtesy of the world than his own assumption) into the title of Captain :—

On our return,—but, hold ;—I had forgot to mention how my friend the Sea-Captain had been newly rigg'd, by a barber of the *rue St. Honoré*, in a formidable square wig,—and how he crowded such a prodigious quantity of sail, in the shape of curls and a toupée, that he was in danger of being blown out of the open barouche which we had hired of Dessein at Calais ;—and how I was dress'd in the outré of Parisian puppyism, after the designs of the famed *Monsieur Louis*, the then fashionable french tailor ;—whereby we had made ourselves two of the greatest *Quizzes*, in our different styles, to be seen in a summer's day,—or rather, (to be correct in my chronology) a day late in the autumn.

In our return, then,—for I must begin my period again, and I hope with better success in getting to the end of it,—we stopp'd at Bethune ; a town of Artois, dull enough in itself ;

but, then, greatly enliven'd by the gallant *Régiment de Blaisois*, of which Monsieur Dillon (celebrated at the French Court as *le beau Dillon*) was Colonel; and, also, by a splendid Company of *Cuirassiers*. Each of those Corps was excellently appointed, and the Officers belonging to them were the *élites* of well-bred military men.—How different from those who soon succeeded them,—the *canaille* who started into command, in the revolutionary army!

My companion luckily met, in this town, a gentleman to whom he had shewn some civilities in England; this was a lively, short, and very brown, Captain of the *Blaisois*, much respected and beloved by all the regiment;—he introduced us to all his brother Officers, and to those of the *Cuirassiers*;—and with so earnest a recommendation, that it induced us to stay in the town, for some little time. Colonel Dillon did us the honour to invite us every day to the Mess, and postponed the dinner hour from 'Twelve o'clock (such was the usage then!) till *One*. Those with whom we sat down put us perfectly at our ease by making no *fuss* of their hospitalities;—a proof of good taste which I had not met with in some

houses where I had been a *convive*, and was overwhelm'd with attentions ; insomuch that I was nearly starved in the midst of plenty.—My anxious hosts, at Paris, conceiving that an englishman could really relish nothing but “ *Roast Bif*,” constantly cramm'd this food (which they don't know how to dress*) under my nose ; and insisted, in the excess of their kindness, that I should eat *that*, and nothing else :—in consequence, I was sometimes obliged to dine upon the burnt-up rib of a skinny ox, while longing for a delicious *fricandeau* standing near it.

A distress, something similar, though not so patiently endured, once happen'd to a German Baron, during his stay in England. He was well recommended to the best families, and invited by people of distinction to a round of dinners,—when he generally found Boil'd Fowls and Ham, served up (as they still are) among other dishes.—Wherever the Baron went, the fowls and the ham made their appearance, almost to a certainty, as component parts of the bill of

* Nor how to spell it;—they always write our “ *Roast Beef of Old England*” as I have given it in the text.

fare ;—till, at last, they became his utter aversion. One day, therefore, being desired to take his seat at table close to those eternal objects of his disgust,—he could bear it no longer ; and vociferated, quite forgetting his respect for the Lady of the House,—“ Ach ! mein Gott !—Cock and Bacon, again !”

This same Baron, before his return to Germany, had a fall from his horse, while enjoying the dust on His Majesty’s highway ; and, when ask’d the particulars of his accident, he uniformly gave them in the following words :—“ Vy I vill tell you ;—Ash I vash ride along de King’s Road, dinking of noding at all, a big black, fat Pork vash come shople out of de hedge ;—he frighty mine horse, and trow me down all so long as I vash.”——Between the *hog* and the *ham*, it seems that Swine, either alive or dead, constituted one of the Baron’s principal vexations, in England ;—fowls were the second cause of his troubles.

Our military friends at Bethune, although they did not attempt english cookery, desired us, however, to observe one custom, after dinner, which they voted to be quite *à l’anglaise* ;—“ *mais, il*

faut de Ponce," they said;—a bowl of what they thought *Punch* was accordingly placed upon the table:—it was nothing more than *Vin de Grave*, or some other light wine, very little diluted, made into negus, with slices of toasted bread floating at the top. The beverage was vastly pleasant, and promoted the "*hazarder*" system capitally; for it made me venture my french at a prodigious rate.

With these most agreeable folks we stay'd a fortnight, including an excursion with two or three of them, for a day and a night, to Lisle, at the distance of about eighteen miles from their quarters. They made us acquainted with all the superior inhabitants (some of whom were of the *noblesse*) in and near the town of Bethune;—we attended balls, concerts, and *petits soupers*, every night;—and, on our departure, the brown little french Officer, to whose introduction we were indebted for all these *agréments*, accompanied us to England,—whither he went almost every year, when Peace between the two Countries would permit him.

The French Land-Captain was of great assistance to the English Sea-Captain, in settling our expenses upon the journey;—for my

companion had been terribly puzzled, all the way, in referring to the Book of Roads,—and in consulting the *Ordonnance* as to how many *Soues* (so he pronounced them) he should give to the post-boys, at the end of every stage*.

Once more in Soho Square, I found my father still firm in his resolution of making me a barrister;—but, aware of my flights, poetical and others, he was not quite so sanguine, in the fond hope of seeing me on the Woolsack, as many an old simple soul is who sends his plodding prodigy to the Inns of Court.—He had been upon the alert, in my absence, to effect his intentions; and had taken chambers for me, up two pair of stairs, in the Temple, having first enter'd my name as a student at Lincoln's Inn; where I afterwards kept a few Terms, by eating oysters†; —a

* It was, then, (I know not what it may be now,) the custom, for englishmen, to give the post-boys double the sum prescribed by the *ordonnance*.

† The Students of Lincoln's-Inn *keep Term* by dining, or pretending to dine, in the Hall, during Term-Time. Those who feed there are accommodated, according to the homely fashion of "Olden Times," with *wooden trenchers*, instead of plates; and, previously to the dinner, oysters are served up, by way of prologue to the play.—Eating the oysters, (or going into the Hall, without eating them, if you please,) and then departing to dine

custom taken, I suppose, from the Fable, and truly emblematical of a law-student's future practice ; the whole process consisting in swallowing up the fish, and leaving the shells.

To the above-mention'd Apartments (in the King's-Bench Walk) my Sire consign'd me ;—having first sprinkled them with a prudential paucity of second hand moveables,—a tent bed, two tables, half a dozen chairs, and a carpet as much too scanty for the boards as Sheridan's "rivulet of rhyme" for its "meadow of margin :"—to these he added about ten-pounds'-worth of Law Books which had been given to him in his own early Lincoln's-Inn days, by Lord Bath ;—with which he told me (mentioning the sum he should allow me, *pro tempore*,) I must work out my fortunes ;—then, enjoining me to labour hard, he left Town upon a party of pleasure.

Among the residents in the same staircase as my own chambers, I had the good fortune to find one with whom it was a great pleasure to me, and no less advantage, to cultivate a neighbourly inter-

elsewhere. is quite sufficient for term-keeping :—there is, however, *an expense* attending all this ; for so costly is Law, that even its students, like clients, find their pockets the lighter for it.

course,—which every body will readily conceive, when I mention the name of *Jekyll*.—He made me a welcoming and a welcome visit, on my arrival at my new abode ; and, glancing over the articles of my establishment, observed a piece of frivolity I had brought with me, which must have appear'd to him (as he was then practising at the Bar) a great interruption to the study of “Coke upon Littleton ;”—this was a round cage with a squirrel in it :—He look'd, for a minute or two, at the little animal, which was performing the same operation as a man in the tread-mill, or a donkey in the wheel, and then quietly said,—“Ah ! poor devil ! he is going the *Home Circuit* !*”—if locality can make a good thing better,

* Those few who do not know the principles on which the old-fashion'd Squirrel-cages were constructed, may learn them *à priori*,—that is, from PRIOR :—

“ There, Thomas, didst thou never see
A Squirrel spend its little rage
In jumping round a rolling cage,
The cage, as either side turn'd up,
Striking a chime of bells a top ?
Moved in the orb, pleased with the chimes,
The foolish creature thinks he climbs ;
But here or there, move wood or wire,
He never gets two inches higher.”

this technical joke was particularly happy from being utter'd in the Temple :—

But, besides the treat of his good jokes, I had the benefit of his good advice, as far as it related to the Drama, exclusively ;—for he had the patience to hear me read, at intervals, scenes from two of my Plays as I was proceeding in them,—these Plays were “ Ways and Means,” and “ Inkle and Yarico ;”—and I profited much by his criticism.

It is pretty plain, from the above instance of my friend Jekyll's kindness, that I was writing for the Theatre when I should have been reading for the Bar. In fact, I abandon'd all appearance of forensick studies, after a very slight show of pursuing them ;—nor could much paternal anger be consistently express'd at this relinquishment of my “ calling” for an “ idle trade,” since “ *my father did so before me.*”

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

“Valeat res ludicra, si me
Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum.”

HORACE.

“What are these wond’rous civilizing arts,
This Roman polish?”

ADDISON.

THE wise old *Saws* against precipitancy in taking a Wife hold equally good, perhaps, in respect to the indeliberate choice of an Occupation.—Certain it is, that many a profess’d scribbler, grown threadbare and grey in his improvident calling, laments that he was ever *wedded to the Nine*, (polygamy, remember, is allow’d in Parnassus,) and feels the force of those two admonitory maxims,—“*Look before you Leap*,” and “*Marry in Haste, to Repent at Leisure*.”—Hence it might be argued, that becoming either

a Husband or a Poet, without due deliberation, may amount to much the same thing :

But I did not very soon regret the rash step I had taken in abandoning the heavy studies of the Law, for the lighter labours of the Drama :—Prosperity, and youthful spirits, protracted my honeymoon with the Scenick Muses ;—yet, alas ! all honeymoons are fleeting in their nature, and are consequently doom'd to wane.

After the commencement of my course as an avow'd Author for the Stage, the first check which my ardour experienced, was in the production of my fourth Play, call'd "*Ways and Means*,"—which encounter'd some opposition, on the night of its probation ;—this opposition was, by no means, what sailors would call a downright gale of wind,—but the weather was *squally*, and not at all pleasant to a young navigator, who had perform'd three previous voyages, in perfectly untroubled waters :—the little vessel, however, rode it out gallantly.

The epilogue, too, (written by myself,) was taken in high dudgeon by the Newspaper Writers ; whom it somewhat impolitickly ridiculed, and

they join'd common cause, by endeavouring to run down the Piece, with much acrimony, in almost all their Journals.—Let the reader judge, from the following extract, what offence this same Epilogue—which was spoken by Palmer, in the Character of a Newspaper Critick,—must have given to the “*Gentlemen of the Press* :”—

— — — — —
 “ I’m a Critick, my masters ! I sneer, splash, and vapour,
 Puff Parties,—damn Poets,—in short, *do* a Paper.
 My name ’s *Johanny Grub*—I’m a vender of Scandal,
 My Pen, like an Auctioneer’s Hammer, I handle,
 Knocking down Reputations, by one inch of candle*.
 I’ve heard out the Play,—yet I need not have come ;
 I’ll tell you a secret, my masters,—but, mum !
 Though ramm’d in amongst you, to praise or to mock it,
 I brought my *Critique*, cut and dry, in my pocket :
 We great Paper Editors—strange it appears !
 Can often, believe me, *dispense with our curs*.
 The Author,—like all other Authors,—well knowing
 That *We* are the people to set him a-going,

* This, it is to be fear’d, is incorrect. The old fashion of “*Sale by Candle*” probably precluded the use of the Hammer ;—and the purchase of the lot, I believe, was decided by the going out of the candle, without the *rap* of the Auctioneer.

Has begg'd me, just now, in a flattering tone,
 To publish a *friendly critique*, of his own :—
 Ev'ry good has its evil ;—we don't pay a *souse*,
 Neither *We*, nor our Friends, to come into the House :
 But, then, 'tis expected, because we are *free*,
 We are bound to praise all the damn'd nonsense we see :—
 Hence comes it, the Houses, their emptiness scorning,
 At low ebb at night, *overflow* in the morning !
 Hence Audiences, seated at ease, at the Play,
 Are squeezed to a mummy, poor devils, next day !
 While self-praising Authors write volumes on volumes,
 And puffs, every morning,—like smoke,—rise in columns."

The lines then proceed to state, that the Author's own partial account of his Play will be suppress'd in the next day's newspaper, and that an abuse of it will be substituted, under the appearance of great candour ;—and the Epilogue concludes with—

" If, therefore, in any one Paper you see
 An abuse of the Play,—whatsoever it be, —
 Wherever the Poet shall find a hard rub,
 That Paper, depend on't, is *done* by JOHN GRUB !"

As one slight instance of the influence which Newspapers have over the minds of the very many people who " don't take the trouble to

think for themselves," the following incident may be adduced :—

A few days after the first representation of "Ways and Means" (the performance of which still continued, in spite of the *Johnny Grubs*,) I stroll'd into Covent Garden Market, where there was, then, another election ;—and there I met my old friend and brother dramatist, *Reynolds* :—while we were walking arm in arm, near the hustings, Reynolds was accosted by an acquaintance who was as unknown to me as I to him ;—he seem'd of the Dandy breed, and said,—it was merely *en passant*,—"Reynolds, how do ?—great crowd here ;—your friend Colman has written a shocking bad Play ;—How goes the Poll ?—never saw the Play, but it's monstrous bad,—fine weather,—very dull Play,—going out of Town soon ?"—&c. &c.

As a *contrary* instance, however, to show how "Time and the hour run through the roughest day," and how a Play can outlive the attacks of ephemeral Censors, "Ways and Means" is, at this time, (forty and odd years after it was brought out,) occasionally acted in the London Houses ; is a Stock Piece, (sometimes com-

press'd into *two* acts, sometimes perform'd in its original *three*,) at most of the provincial theatres ;—and is thus spoken of in the *Biographia Dramatica* :—

“This is a Play of considerable merit, abounding in wit and well-drawn characters. The Plot is simple, but clear, lively, and probable. The character of Sir David Dunder is well imagined, and naturally supported throughout. The dialogue is neat, and well suited to the respective dramatis personæ. The author tells us, [in a preface] that in this piece ‘laugh and whim were his objects ; and the mirth and good-humour of his audience, *whatever malice and misrepresentation may affirm to the contrary*, have convinced him that his design is accomplish’d.’ ”—(BIOGRAPHIA DRAMATICA).

I beg pardon for quoting the above *éloge* upon myself,—but it is a link in my chain, (if there be any concatenation at all in these *Random Records*,) which I may be excused for not having omitted.—Whether the Trifle here in question had been lauded to the skies, or hiss'd off the

Stage, can be, now, of no more importance to me than to my readers; and I care, at this moment, as little about my *Ways and Means*, of 1784, as for the state of national Finance in the reign of William the Conqueror;—I should not, therefore, have mention'd the foregoing petty vexations, had they not, for the *first time*, caused me to reflect a little (and *very* little did I, then, reflect) on the folly of having relinquish'd the study of an honourable profession,—in which I had a fair chance of rising, through industry and the connexions I possess'd,—that I might “watch the wild vicissitudes of taste,” and make myself dependent upon an arbitrary and capricious Body, composed of Pit, Box, and Galleries,—that *Monstrum Horrendum* whom I must, thenceforward, “live to please,” that I might “please, to live.”

My Opinions have long since been form'd upon the subject of a *Play-house Publick*;—and an Outline of such Opinions will probably be look'd for from me, by most of my readers;—for, in taking up the Random Records of a veteran Dramatist, they will naturally expect to find both theatrical anecdote and discussion:—Not to disappoint such perusers of my Volumes, I now sub-

mit to them certain of my lucubrations which have been written some years, but, till now, never publish'd.—How I happen'd to write them, must be explain'd.

The late LORD ERSKINE printed, not many years before his death, a book entitled “*ARMATA*,” in one volume ; to which, after some little interval, he added a second. The work is partly of a political, and partly of a satirical, description :—by *Armata*, is meant *England* ; and *London* is designated by the Capital of SWALLOWAL.

My valued and noble friend kindly made me a present of these Two Volumes, accompanied by the following letter :—

DEAR SIR,

As men of real genius are always the most indulgent criticks, I send you my little Romance without fear.—The two parts are very different ; The first was intended to be a kind of bolus to swallow my old politicks in, which were too long pass'd to be a political pamphlet ; and, having got out of this our World, without going to that from whose bourn no traveller returns, I was obliged to come back again to Town,—describing

it, however, as if in the world I had just left. I should like to know whether you think my remarks upon the Stage are correct.

Believe me to be always

Yours most faithfully,

ERSKINE.

No. 4, Upper Berkeley Street,

March 10th, 1818.

George Colman, Esq.

Again, I ought to apologize, perhaps, for printing a panegyrick upon my own humble abilities,—but I consider the commencement of Lord Erskine's letter as the mere expression of courtesy.—Whether he meant it so or not, I supposed him in earnest when he desired to hear what I thought of his Remarks on the Stage.—Those remarks were comprised under three heads ; namely,—

Occasional Tumults in the London Theatres ;

The Dimensions of the Two Principal Theatres ;

. The Education of Actors.

I sent him the thoughts he requested, crudely, though somewhat copiously, written ; wherein I

took the liberty to differ entirely from the Noble Lord, on the first and last topicks;—on the second we, for the most part, agreed :—the first more immediately appertains to those half-repentant reflections, on turning dramatist, which I have stated myself to have made, after having *divided the House*, (though with a large majority in my favour,) upon the question of my “ *Ways and Means* :”—so, on this first topick, I now give an extract from a copy of the manuscript which I forwarded to Lord Erskine.

“ There was no tumult or disorder, [in the theatre] which I was told almost never took place but when something was radically wrong.”—(AR-
MATA ; *vol. 2, p. 108.*)

It is taken for granted that the expression of “ radically wrong” refers to the London Stage, and the conduct of its concerns,—and *not* to the Audience :—but, although “ *almost never*” is a qualifying expression, it seems to give more credit to that Mass of People which fills a Playhouse than perhaps it deserves.—The Dramatick, like the Political Stage,—if it may be compared with

that much more important scene of action,—may be pester'd and gall'd with incendiaries and malignants ;—with *Radicals* who should be uprooted, and *Reformers* who should reform themselves.

A theatrical Audience being a multitude, it is to be recollected that a small part of a multitude can foment “tumult and disorder ;”—and in all multitudes there are many to be found who are illiberal, capricious, and ill judging, enough, to be frequently clamorous about many matters which are not “radically wrong.”—A play-going multitude is; moreover, less apprehensive than another mob of consequences arising from its dis-temperature ; for all its component parts, from the Nobleman to the Cobler, are the “Drama’s Patrons ;” and the Protégés, who depend upon their favour, seldom can, and less seldom dare, appeal from the Laws of their Patrons, to the Laws of their Country.—Is it to be conceived that such a heterogeneous body, invested with such powers of being turbulent, will not often be so, without just cause ?

Few men glide through even the most private life without encountering an enemy ; but a Dramatist, however personally retired, is virtually,

and in a peculiar point of view, before the Publick,—and accumulates fresh opponents as often as he courts fresh notice.—His mere act of coming forward to establish a name is a sort of assumption;—a Writer who professes to amuse, and, at the same time, admonish, mankind,—to sway their passions and to improve their morals,—implies that he thinks himself somewhat more intellectually gifted than his neighbours :—now, whether his work be radically right or wrong, men are prepared to cavil at the lessons of such a preceptor ;—and will not this propensity in an Audience so far, at least, augment the rigour of fastidious criticism, that stern Justice may, in some cases, forget to temper herself with Mercy ?

But, besides this probable feeling in an audience,—for it is only mention'd *conjecturally*,—there have been, doubtless, various persons who, on the first night of a new Play, have aim'd at the Author's miscarriage, from private pique, or some uncharitable or wanton motive ; and who have been upon the alert to effect it, by “ tumult and disorder.”

Envy alone is the parent of mischief ;—and, should the Playwright have already attain'd pre-

eminence, the very flood of his popularity pours upon him a number of invidious foes, as the clearest torrent brings a certain portion of rubbish.

If a Manager “ writes, himself,” as it is express’d in “ *The Critick*,” he is more obnoxious to enmity than other Dramatists ; because, in addition to the adversaries which all Dramatists have to encounter, in common, various would-be Authors and Actors, whose offers he has rejected, —or which he has accepted *to their own publick exposure*,—are outrageous against him ; and come themselves,—and form a party when they can,—to explode his Play, on its first representation.—Is it not to be said, on these occasions,—when to wound the Man through his Muse is the latent object,—that “ tumult and disorder” arise from something which is not “ radically wrong” on the part of the Author and Manager ?

Any Dramatist, (be he Manager or not,) when he first brings his Play into action, exposes himself more to the attacks of malice and wanton hostility than any other description of writer.—Authors for the closet can never be absolutely discredited through such a condemnation as causes *immediate* and *decisive* failure ; but the

Dramatist draws a Bill upon Fame, *at sight* ; it is acknowledged or protested at the moment it is presented ;—those who would rejoice at seeing him a bankrupt are not likely to neglect the opportunity of dishonouring his draught ;—and this is to be effected by “ tumult and disorder,” when the million has nothing “ radically wrong,” to reprobate.

There are not only enemies, as above-mention'd, of the several Dramatists ; but enemies, also, of the particular Houses in which their Dramas are produced ;—there are Drury Lane and Covent Garden *party-men* ; who, accordingly as they are attach'd to the interests of one House, are hostile to the prosperity of the other.—During the first night of a representation at Covent Garden, I have heard the call of “ turn out those noisy fellows from Drury Lane,”—and *vice versé* ;—but it would be very unjust to infer that such low zealots are set on, or at all encouraged in their malevolent endeavours, by the rival proprietors.

Not very long ago, it was the fashion (a fashion not yet, perhaps, entirely worn out) for the Bucks, and Blades, and Bloods, of the Town, to go to a New Play on purpose to condemn it ;—this

tumultuous attempt to annihilate anything, and everything, before it could be ascertain'd to be right or wrong, being denominated "good sport," "high fun," &c. &c.

During the greater portion of time consumed in the disgraceful O. P. Riots, surely the rioters were "radically wrong," (indeed *rioters* can never be *right*,) after the Proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre had ceased to be wrong at all.—The Proprietors were clumsy politicians in attempting to force CATALANI, a foreigner from the Italian Opera, upon the English Stage, at the moment they were raising their prices upon the publick ;—the Publick seized this circumstance to resist an increased demand upon them for entrance ; blending the abstract question of *Catalani*, and of certain additional *Private Boxes*, with the question of an advanced price upon admission ;—an advance fairly justified by the enormous (though certainly absurd) expense incurr'd in building a new Theatre on so spacious and magnificent a plan :—the Proprietors, in submission, relinquish'd Catalani, and rescinded the additional private boxes ;—notwithstanding which, "tumults and disorders," of a very ruffian-like description, were systemati-

cally continued, when nothing remain'd "radically wrong" to protract them.

Lately*, no *Débutant* could appear in *King Richard the Third* without an evident Party to explode him, as soon as he enter'd upon the Stage,—because Mr. *Kean* was their idol.—There is not the most distant intention to insinuate, here, that Mr. Kean would not spurn at this outrage in his admirers ;—on the contrary, it is trusted he would be one of the first to declare that they were "disorderly, and tumultuous," before anything "wrong" could be discover'd,—except in themselves.

Whence arise the deafening vociferations, when there is a full house, of "turn him out!"—and "throw him over?"—Why is a vocal Performer so often kept on a *see-saw*,—call'd back, sent off, call'd back again,—about the *encore* of a song,—and, at last, after ten minutes, perhaps, of confusion, obliged to sing it, in the midst of the "tumult and disorder" of a divided audience ?—

Again,—why is a Play, on the first exhibition of a Christmas Pantomime, acted almost in dumb-

* It should be remember'd that this was written in the year 1818.

show, (like the mummerly that is to follow it) in consequence of the “tumult and disorder” of the Spectators?—Why is the same uproar kept up on an Easter Monday?—Why, during the intervals, however short, between the Acts, is the Stage strew’d with apples, and orange-peels,—accompanied, in their descent thither, by the shouts, groans, whistles, catcalls, yells, and screeches, of the turbulent assemblage which has so elegantly impell’d its vegetable projectiles from the upper regions?—Why was poor *Nosey*, of the Orchestra, (not yet quite forgotten by veteran play-goers) tormented nightly by hearing the *sobriquet* he had acquired, from his proboscis, bellow’d at him from the galleries?—Why are disturbances in the Upper Boxes, and Lobbies, among Blackguards and Women of the Town, by no means rare?—Certainly from nothing “radically wrong” in the Conductors of a Theatre.

In pursuing this side of the question, it is freely admitted, on the other hand, that very much theatrical trash may be swallow’d peaceably and orderly, through favour and cabal;—but this admission no more relinquishes what has been advanced, than allowing one eye to be in a

head is an acknowledgment that there is not another :—

And, putting both prejudices and predilections, to be found in many parts of an Audience, out of the question,—how far there may be want of judgment in that Publick whom Managers and Actors are obliged to call *the discerning*,—how far such a bulk of discerners may *not* discern,—how far its rude breath may blow down merits it might uphold, while it supports the bubbles it should break,—is left to future consideration.

Much might be superadded to fortify an opinion that “*almost never*” (in the above quotation) is too lenient an expression towards that Many-Headed Monster, by which a London Theatre exists ;—it is, however, the lenity of a British mind, putting the best gloss upon national character ;—a lenity fraught with the *amor patriæ*.

The above animadversions, which were transmitted to the noble Author of *Armata*, at his own desire, contain all that has any bearing upon my reasons for an incipient, but now confirm'd, dislike to those turbulent, and often humiliating, ordeals which the profess'd Dramatist must repeatedly undergo. Here, then, I might break

off;—and I have already, (at the conclusion of my first volume,) touch'd upon his Lordship's Second question, which relates to the enormous dimensions of our Two Principal Theatres,—on which subject he says,—“let no apology be made for the magnitude of their playhouses;” deeming such magnitude “a very great *defect*.”

As for his *third* and last point,—two or three friends have advised me to wind up my present Commentary with it, and so make one short Chapter upon Dramatick disquisition.—Since I am in the habit of relying much upon their judgment,—since also those who may think such inquiry too dry may *skip* it,—I give my sentiments upon the “*Education of Theatrical Performers*.”

“Another cause has long obstructed a more continued succession of superior Actors, but which, for the improved manners and genius of many of them, both dead and living, has been for some time insensibly wearing away—I mean the estimation in which the Stage has been regarded.” —(ARMATA, 2*d.* part, p. 110).

This is delicately worded,—“estimation,” according to the sense in which the Author has

employ'd it, being a tender term for downright *disrepute*. He proceeds by saying :—

“To secure for it,” (the Stage) “a perpetual and still increasing lustre, the road should be open, as in other professions, to the most liberal consideration,—nothing else can invite its professors to LEARNED AND POLISH’D EDUCATIONS ; *without which*, in the superior branches of acting, *there can be no brilliant succession.*”—(*ibid.* pp. 110, and 111). And, further on,—“To bring the Stage, therefore, in England, and indeed every where else, to its proper bearings, its professors must be cherish’d, and respected.”—(*p.* 112).

But should it not be asserted, that, the obstructive cause, namely, “the estimation [meaning *disrepute*] in which the Stage has been regarded,” has long *actually worn out*, rather than that it “has been for some time insensibly wearing away ?”—and is it fair to complain that there has not been a long “continued succession of Superior Actors,” in our Metropolis ?—all such succession, at least, as the most *favourable* estimation of the Stage can produce ?—for, though such estimation may “invite

its professors" to polish themselves, it cannot give them absolute genius ; a succession of which must always be a matter of chance.

Actors are, and have been, for a length of time, in this Country, frequently seen at tables with the nobility ; when those among them who have the manners of gentlemen are "respected" accordingly ; and they all meet respect as far as their talents (which procure them invitations to such tables) have a claim to it.

Without going further back, does not Pope say, speaking of Cibber,

"Has not Colley, too, his *Lord*," &c. ?

and, surely, in the present day, no body of men enjoy more opportunities of mingling in the society of their superiors in rank than Actors.—With these facilities,—even *courted* as they are by persons of high birth,—the rest must depend upon themselves :—but it does not appear that good dinners, in good company, lead the generality of them to the Pursuits of Literature.

"Without which" [learned and polish'd education] "in the superior branches of acting there can be no brilliant succession. We might have

self-taught *genius* even from the desert, but the ordinary soil of nature must be *highly dress'd*," &c. &c.—(ARMATA, 2d part, p. 111).

Does the learned and ingenious Traveller to Armata mean to say that we should have a *School* for Actors?—a School to teach them all the dead and living languages ;—a College to lecture them on the old Classics ;—to instruct them in ancient and modern History ;—in logick, ethicks, mathematicks ;—in the Belles Lettres ;—and in *Fashions*?—Does he opine that *such* a school is indispensable to drill Performers, in order to prepare them for the representation of the Heroes of Greece, the Emperors of Rome, the old Kings and Barons of England, the Gentlemen in the days of Henry the Eighth, Queen Anne, his late Majesty George the Second, and his present Majesty George the Third*?—If so, this seems to be much more than is necessary.

That the “Soil of Nature” is better for being “highly dress’d” is, in a *general point of view*,

* Again the reader is requested to remember that this was written in 1818.

indisputable ;—but what high dressing will most enrich the soil of an Actor's "genius," is another consideration.—And may not deep learning sometimes stiffen Genius, (particularly the genius of an Actor,) into *pedantry* ?—as the Stays and Back-boards of pretty Misses mend their shapes by destroying their ease.

Is it not rather an easier task for Actors of any genius to *perform* Kings, Heroes, and Gentlemen, than to *write* them,—as Shakspeare did, with little or no pretensions to learning ?—and did not Shakspeare, as a Dramatist, with his "small latin, and less greek," (some read it "*no greek*,") surpass Ben Jonson with all his erudition ?

And, then, what is to be done with the *females* of a theatre ?—must *they* be LEARNED, too ?—Can they not represent Queens, and Heroines, and Gentlewomen, without going to School, or to College,—or to Routs, or to Court ? Queen Elizabeth talk'd and writ latin ; but can no woman *act* Queen Elizabeth, unless she is a Scholar ?—or a Roman Matron, unless she has been grounded in the roman language, or the

roman history ?—Or may not Mrs. Siddons have reach'd the height of her great theatrical celebrity without being a *blue-stocking* ?

There is, at Paris, an “ *Ecole Royale de Musique** ;” an establishment upon which the King of France expends 168,000 francs, or £7000 per year ; the object of which is to instruct, under the ablest masters, four hundred young persons, of both sexes, in all the branches of vocal and instrumental musick, and acting :—there is, moreover, a course of french grammar, versification, and as much history as is necessary ;—also, a course call'd *Tenue de Corps*, (which is the Art of disposing the body and limbs to the greatest possible advantage) ;—and a course of dancing.

Frenchmen, it is well known, profess to carry their ideas of the Stage, like many other of their ideas, to the extreme point of refinement. Their Tragedy, in particular, is so refined, that it is much too sublime for the taste of John Bull,—or for Nature :—But it is to be observed, in the

* Again please to remember that this was written in 1818 ;—whether this *Ecole* exists at the actual time when these volumes are now for the first time printed, I am not certain.

above-mention'd *Ecole*, how very small a proportion of its studies are allotted to Learning,—to classical education. Musick, no doubt, must be *taught*, in all countries, to those who would attain eminence, as publick singers ;—to this the *Ecole* attends ;—and adds fencing, and dancing, to give the *graces* :—Declamation, too, they teach, —and French Tragedians *do* declaim, with a vengeance !—But, after all this, the pupils are no further instructed than in the *grammar* of their native tongue, in versification, (for the improvement of the ear,) and as much history *as is necessary*.

Now, no Performer, of good common sense and understanding, can read one of Shakspeare's Historical Plays, in which he is to act, without deriving from it as much instruction, as to character, manners, and customs, as may enable him to enter into the spirit of his Part. It would be going too far to say that more historical knowledge would not be beneficial to him,—but the Play itself might furnish him with as much *history as is necessary*, for the occasion.

It is presumed that a genius for “ genteel comedy,” as it is call'd, is quick in catching the

manners of a gentleman ; a few lessons among the upper ranks, may, therefore, be sufficient for him : but it is curious to observe in *private* theatricals, that the Amateurs, from whom the profess'd Actor is to learn deportment, and manners, are a thousand times more awkward, upon a Stage, than a regular performer of very moderate ability.

The expression of the *Passions* is one great and primary part of a superior Actor's skill ; and, as to tragedy, the art of exhibiting the sudden and violent commotions of mind, in King Lear, Othello, Macbeth, and various other characters, is not to be brought to perfection by the study of books, nor by an intercourse with the *most highly polish'd Society*, since the Christian Era. An Actor of the passions obtains inconsiderable aid from the Library, and much less from the drawing-room :—he must closely watch the effects of impulsive Nature, in *universal Man*.

Many instances might be brought of Actors who have been “superior,” without the advantage of the *literæ humaniores*, or of familiar habits with the great ;—nay, of superior Actors seemingly rather below *par* in intellect, except in their

profession. *Powell*, the tragedian, who died young, was highly successful; he came upon the Stage, uncultivated, from his desk in an Attorney's office, and was reckon'd, in private life, to be a person of rather inferior understanding.—Where did the young tragick Actress, lately retired from Covent Garden Theatre, procure the graces and energies for which she has been so justly admired?—where did she learn to personate, not only the Juliets, and Belvideras, and Isabellas, but the Lady Townlys, Mrs. Oakleys, &c. &c.?—in minor theatrical companies, travelling about the obscurer districts of Ireland.

“The most uneducated,” says the Traveller to Armata, “may excel in clowns, and buffoons, and lower characters.”—But, since some Actors may perform a clown without associating with country bumpkins, why may not others play a gentleman, or a hero, without owing much to scholastick education, or to an intimacy with people of fashion, —or to an old acquaintance with Mark Antony, or Julius Cæsar?—A London Performer, living with his equals only, may be supposed (although excellent on the Stage as a peasant) to have as few Ploughmen as Peers for his companions.

The character of *Lovel*, in the farce of *High Life below Stairs*, demands the manners both of a gentleman and a rustick ; yet this has been well represented by many who have neither moved in very high nor very low circles. *Feignwell*, in *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, is a Field-Officer, assuming the various disguises of a Béau, a Conjuring Virtuoso, a Dutch Merchant, a superannuated Country Steward, and a Quaker. *Woodward*, *John Palmer*, and *John Bannister*, were, all, excellent in this part ; but they were no more indebted, for their celebrity in it, to the Schools, or to the precepts of the late Lord Chesterfield, than to coxcombs, conjurors, dutch traders, stewards, quakers, &c., &c.

Give a Candidate for the Stage, who has talent, that sort of schooling which almost all decent parents, even below the rank of gentlemen, afford their children ;—put Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary into his hands ; give him a smattering of french ; with a few lessons of fencing, and of graceful attitudes, and motions, from the best masters,—and he will have acquired more than several who have been eminent upon the Stage ; and be nearly as learned, and elegant, as five out of ten, perhaps,

of the *Dandies* who are to teach him the *bon ton* of clubs, and of fashionable assemblies.

Whether my readers may coincide with me in these Loose Thoughts which I have ventured to throw upon paper, Time, and perhaps the SAGES IN CRITICISM, may show :—they are submitted as points to be mooted, and not as opinions in which I presume to pass a definitive judgment :—

How far my departed Noble Friend, to whom they were address'd, appear'd to approve them, may be gather'd from the letter here subjoin'd.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

I would sooner have told you how much I was pleased and obliged by your observations, but I was in the country, and only received them on my return to Town.

Nothing can be more just, as well as interesting, than the whole of them, which I shall carefully preserve.

Yours most faithfully,

ERSKINE.”

4, *Upper Berkeley Street,*

April 12th, 1818.

CHAPTER NINTH.

“ SELF-SUFFICIENCY proceeds from inexperience.”

ADDISON.

“ Death having prey'd upon the outward parts,
Leaves them insensible ;—his siege is, now,
Against the Mind, thē which he pricks and wounds
With many legions of strange fantasies,
Which, in their throng and press to that last hold,
Confound themselves.”

SHAKSPEARE.

By virtue of the right to be desultory and irregular,—a privilege claim'd and exercised throughout these volumes, in consequence of fair warning given in the Introductory Chapter,—I now return to the latter part of the year 1784 :—

For it is to be recollected, that, I have hurried my readers into an account of my *fourth* Play, in 1788, before I had begun to write my *second*, a little before the commencement of 1785 ;—and, still further to bewilder them, in respect to chronological order, have led them a wild-goose chase (by the help of Lord Erskine)

through a Chapter of abstracted questions, upon theatrical subjects, written in the year 1818.

I commenced my Second Drama on the morning of the 20th of December, 1784,—a remarkable day in the annals of Modern Learning ; for I had not written half an hour when I was interrupted by the intelligence that the Funeral Procession of the great DOCTOR JOHNSON was on its way, from his late residence in Bolt Court, down Fleet Street, to Westminster Abbey.

I threw down the pen, and ran forth from my two pair of stairs chambers, in the Temple, to gaze at the mournful train attendant upon the corpse of this literary Leviathan ; but was disappointed in my expectations of its grandeur :—

GARRICK's sepulchral pomp, which I had witnessed five years previously, (when I was soon to leave Westminster School,) had been much more splendid and imposing.

The only principal mourners, on the present occasion, were, I believe, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great Edmund Burke, Sir John Hawkins, my Father, and the deceased Doctor's *Black Man**.

* His old and faithful Servant.

Among others who attended, were Doctor Horsley, General Paoli, Hoole the translator of Metastasio, with several holders-up of conspicuous Authors' tails,—I mean Commentators and Printers,—such as Stevens, Malone, Nichols, &c., &c.—But, however inferior to Garrick's funeral solemnities, I deem'd Johnson's obsequies fully sufficient ;—for, I was, then, so bigoted to theatricals, that I look'd upon the Stage as the only field in which the lasting leaves of Bay were to be gather'd ;—and I contemplated the mighty Johnson only as a minor Dramatist, whose Tragedy of *Irene* had not been so popular as the *Musical Comedy of Two to One* ! !—

It did not, then, occur to me,—or, at least, I left it out of the account,—that his Prologue for Opening Drury Lane Theatre (in 1747) was a specimen of dramatick Poetry to live in fame for ages ;—that he had besides acquired a vast stock of erudition ;—that he had put forth the stupendous labour of his English Dictionary ;—that his Moral and Political Writings, his Poems of “ London,” and the “ Vanity of Human Wishes,”—his *Rasselas*, his *Rambler*, his Preface to Shakspeare's Works, his *Lives of the Poets*, &c.

—were each of them, separately, enough to immortalize a memory.

Alas ! alas !—I thought not of all this ;—nor of any thing much, at that time,—but myself, and my Musical Comedy ;—and when a Play-scribbling Younger is inflated with a little temporary, or rather *trumpery*, success, he may, like a lover, described by the Bard,

“ Bestride the gossamer,
And yet not fall, so light is vanity !

While in this state of vain-glorious intoxication, I attributed, of course, all the applause my first production had obtain'd purely to its own intrinsic merits ; not setting down one particle of the approbation to encouragement bestow'd on *boyish promise* :—On the contrary, I conceived that, having once felt the pulse of the publick, I was thoroughly acquainted with its constitution ; —that I had taken measure of the Town's taste, and knowing, now, exactly how to fit it, I could lead the play-going world in a string.—“ Oho !” said I mentally, “ if Two to One has tickled them so much, I shall tickle them a great deal more, the next time :” —So down I sat again, on my return from the Doctor's funeral procession, to

most inveterately comical, and even to *outdo* **MYSELF** :

I *did* outdo myself, at a furious rate !—I doubled all the faults of my first composition in my second.—Instead of splashing carelessly with a light brush, I now deliberately laid it on with a trowel ;—to say nothing of the flimsiness and improbability of my Plot, I labour'd so much to sparkle in dialogue,—studied so deeply for antitheses, quibbles, and puns,—

“ And glittering thoughts struck out at every line,”—

that I produced a very puerile and contemptible performance ;—a second Musical Comedy in Three Acts,—under the title of “ *Turk and No Turk.*”

This Piece, however, was received much better than it deserved, and without one dissentient voice :—it was acted, however, only ten nights, in the summer of 1785 ;—and, to the very slight scratch my *amour propre* received,—but which I would not confess, scarcely to myself,—I applied the flattering unction, from Horace, of “ *decies repetita placebit* :”—but I could not be so blinded by youthful coxcombry as not to suspect that I had been a *little* mistaken in the *measure I had taken of the Town.*

Several years after this, when I became Manager of the Haymarket Theatre, I raked out this same Play from the Prompter's closet ; in hopes that it might be useful as *junk*, and (as there was some sprightly musick in it) would cut down to a good actable Farce.—I read it,—blush'd,—and tore the copy to tatters.—The Prompter told me that there was no other copy remaining, and that I had made a breach in the Archives of the Little Theatre ;—I heartily hope and trust that he was correct in his statement.

Wretched as the above effort was, I must, in my earlier days, have had *some* right notions of dramattick construction,—otherwise I could not have succeeded at all ;—and, having succeeded, it is no wonder that I could not, at once, see all my very great deficiencies ; when so many, who have not the remotest idea of what is fit for the Stage, complain vehemently of their Dramas having been rejected.

People would be astonish'd if they were aware of the cart-loads of trash which are annually offer'd to the Director of a London Theatre :—

The very first Manuscript which was proposed to me for representation, on my undertaking thea-

trical management, was from a nautical gentleman, on a nautical subject :—the Piece was of a tragick description, and in five acts ;—during the principal scenes of which the Hero of the Drama declaim'd from the Main-Mast of a Man-of-War, without once descending from his position.

In this year, my “ *Turk and no Turk*” doff'd his turban to make room for Mrs. Inchbald's “ *I'll Tell you What ;*”—a five-act Comedy of much merit ; which was, on its first production, excellently acted in most of its characters. Among the prominent Performers in this Play, were, Palmer, Parsons, Bensley, Mrs. Stephen Kemble,—and—I forget the rest.—It had lain for some time in the dark, upon the Manager's shelf, like a jewel in the ground ; and there it would, probably, have lain for some time longer, if the success of her Farce (the *Mogul Tale*) had not roused his attention to the authoress's talents ; this induced him to revise the dormant manuscript, and to produce it to the publick.

Besides Mrs. Inchbald's good Play, and my own bad one, there was no novelty worth mentioning, this summer, at the Hay-Market Theatre, except

“ Here and There and Everywhere,” a Speaking Pantomime, which did not speak much for itself, in the representation.

At the end of September,—the Theatre having closed its Season on the 15th, as usual,—my Father went to Margate,—which was his favourite Watring-place; although he, now and then, visited Brighton, when put in requisition by his present Majesty,—then Prince of Wales. The pride of paying his duty was a counterbalance to the flurries and fatigues which these visits sometimes occasion'd to my sire :—

The Prince once did him the honour to send for him while Cricket-Matches were going forward, at which His Royal Highness expected my father to assist.—Weltjie was despatch'd to London, to bring him down in a phaeton,—phaetons being, at that time, almost as high from the ground as the first floor of a house,—and Weltjie drove up and down hill like a devil.—My father was, then, of a certain age,—of sedentary habits,—somewhat timid,—and his legs were very short. These qualities were altogether very ill suited for the perils (as he often call'd them) of the journey, and the active post of a Long-Stop at Cricket ;—

he certainly must have felt himself out of his element.

About three weeks or a month after his departure from Town, I was thrown into great alarm by the arrival of a messenger, sent express, with the intelligence that my father had been suddenly taken ill,—that the delay of some days in apprizing me of it had arisen from the hope of his getting better, and the desire to spare me from a shock before there was an actual necessity for it;—but that now he was so much worse that his life was in imminent danger.

This afflicting news reach'd me about ten o'clock at night;—and before eleven I was in a post-chaise, with Jewell the Treasurer, (my old hack travelling companion, upon all emergencies,) on the high road to Margate.

Travelling in the dead of night, when darkness is unpropitious to speed, and without an *avant courier* to rouse the slumbering retainers of the different Inns, that relays might be ready against our arrival, considerably retarded a progress which required more than common expedition:—we lost nearly half an hour, at the end of every stage, in changing horses; and it was between

ten and eleven o'clock, in the forenoon, before we were set down at the house which my father had hired in Margate.

My anxiety was a little relieved on finding that he had pass'd a tolerably tranquil night, and that the apprehension of immediate danger was not so great as on the previous day. I hasten'd to his bed-side ;—he could speak but little ; and, indeed, orders had been given that he should be kept as quiet as possible, and prevented from talking at all :—he inform'd me, however, that he was extremely discontented with the medical adviser who had been call'd in,—that he had *quarrell'd* with him, but that he still continued to attend. A quarrel, under such circumstances, seem'd very strange ;—and it then occur'd to me, for the first time, that, in the agitation of the moment, and the hurry of leaving Town, I had been guilty of a most absurd omission, by bringing the Play-house Treasurer with me, instead of a Physician ;—it was like running to assist at a conflagration without an engine, or a single bucket of water, to extinguish the flames.

To repair this blunder, Jewell was instantly put upon the fatiguing duty of returning to

London, with instructions to bring back with him Doctor Warren, (the Sir Henry Hallford of his day,) if his aid could be procured ;—of which I had some faint hope, notwithstanding his great practice, as he was one of my father's old friends, and his associate in the Literary Club ;—or, if such attendance could not be had, to obtain that of some other gentleman of the Faculty, whom Doctor Warren might recommend.

When Jewell had started, which was in about an hour after we had arrived, I then heard the details of what had happen'd ; which differ much from the accounts given in any of the biographical and theatrical publications which have come under my notice :—those accounts state that my father “first show'd symptoms of derangement of his mind in the year 1789,” (four years after this attack,) which “increasing gradually left him in a state of idiotism ;”—and that he was, as Churchill expresses it,

“Deep sunk in *childhood's second night*,”

and doom'd

“To drivel out whole years of idiot breath.”

I am scarcely able to define my feelings on this

subject, and to express my ideas on the different shades of calamity in cases of mental aberration :— in every such case, the infliction, no doubt, is dreadful ;—but in all the various examples of “ a noble mind o’erthrown,” Idiotism appears to me the most abject state to which humanity can be reduced.—A Frantick Sufferer’s intellectual ruin is contemplated with a kind of respectful commiseration ; but we are prone to look with contemptuous pity on the unhappy man who, from a deprivation of his reasoning faculties, has sunk into the “ Fool of Nature*.”—Painful, therefore, though it be to dwell upon my Parent’s condition, when in the decline of his life, I think it right to correct the erroneous particulars which have been publish’d, relative to his malady :—the following are the facts.

My father had not gone to the coast as an invalid, in the year 1785 ;—but, for the first three weeks, or rather more, after his coming to Margate, he bathed daily in the sea ; from which he apparently derived much benefit ; and felt, as he

* “ The Fool of Nature stood with stupid eyes,
And gaping mouth.”—

DRYDEN.

repeatedly said, that he was laying in a stock of health for the ensuing winter.

One morning, on his return, in high spirits, from the bath, he could not help observing, as he sat down before the glass to shave, the improvement in his looks ; and, having perform'd the usual operations of the toilette, he ate a remarkably hearty breakfast. His carriage then came to the door, in which he was to take his friend Doctor Arnold (who had been on a visit to him) as far as Canterbury, on his way to London.

Arnold had already stepp'd into the carriage, and my father was following him, when he recollected that he had left a small bunch of keys, which he always carried in his pocket, on the table of his dressing-room ;—he return'd for them into the house, and was ascending the staircase, at a quick pace, when he was seized with paralysis ;—one half of his frame was severely affected,—the limbs on that side had entirely lost their power ; and, on the other side, he held by the railing of the stairs, unable to call for assistance.

In this deplorable situation he was discover'd by his valet-de-chambre, who happen'd to be coming down ; and, when supported by the ser-

vant, my poor father instinctively put up that hand which had escaped the shock to his face, that he might ascertain (as he afterwards told me) whether the mouth and features had suffer'd ;—but, in that instance, it had pleased Providence to spare him.

By this time, the alarm had been given in the house, by the servant's cry for help ;—Arnold—who, unluckily in such a conjuncture, was not a Doctor of Medicine, but a Doctor of Musick,—rush'd from the carriage to his friend ; and, having seen him convey'd to bed, hurried out for a medical practitioner, with whom both he and my father were acquainted, and who was residing, *pro tempore*, in the neighbourhood.

This gentleman was a Doctor R.—I shall not give his name at full ;—he was a protégé of the late Lord Abingdon, through whom my father first knew him* ;—he was, also, like many of his learned brethren of Warwick Lane, who overstock the Town, by no means encumber'd with

* The late Lord Abingdon had a passion for musick, and Doctor R. was so thorough a disciple of Apollo, that he studied both physicking and fiddling ;—*in utrumque paratus* ;—hence the Peer's patronage of the Doctor.

patients ; and, therefore, visited Margate during the season, upon the speculation of meliorating his fortunes, by picking up customers ;—at certain periods of the year, a London physician in want of employment is as naturally station'd at a watering-place as an empty hackney-coach is drawn up on the stand ; and, as to the articles thus severally in waiting for a fee and a fare,—whether we call a Coach or a Doctor, the chances are against our getting a good one.

Whatever Doctor R.'s skill might have been, I do not pretend to determine ;—but he proceeded to act upon my father with that decisive energy which may, perhaps, be requisite in a case where life or death must be set upon a cast.—He was very profuse in blistering the patient,—which for aught I know might have been perfectly proper,—the application, however, of these stimulants was follow'd by great excitement ; and my father was, for two or three days, in a state of something *more* than delirium :—in his paroxysms he tore off the blisters, and express'd his abhorrence of the Doctor in terms of fury.—Before my arrival at Margate, his disorder had fluctuated ;—sometimes he raged,—then subsided into a sullen calm for some

hours,—then raged again;—and, for a week or two *after* my arrival, the same frightful symptoms of a disturb'd judgment now and then recurr'd.—I have always dated the beginning of his derangement from the time of this illness, and consider'd it as the prologue to the tragedy which follow'd;—I am confirm'd in this opinion by all the professional men who were consulted on the occasion.

His case was simply this ;—he had Gout in his habit, which had been indicated so slightly, that he neglected the hints to take care of himself which Nature had mildly thrown out.—Cold Bathing is, perhaps, one of the most dangerous luxuries in which an elderly man can indulge, when so formidable an enemy is lurking in his constitution;—The Gout having been repell'd, by repeated submersion in the sea, not only paralyzed the body, but distemper'd the brain,—and Reason was subverted !

But, from the earliest sparks of his disorder, at the end of 1785, till it blazed forth unequivocally, in June 1789,—an interval of rather more than three years and a half,—and, again, from the last mention'd year, to the time of his decease,—there

was nothing of that “ second childishness, and mere oblivion,” which his biographers have attach’d to his memory.

The assertion that his gradually increasing derangement left him in “ a state of idiotism,” is directly the reverse of fact. His mind—instead of having grown progressively vacant till it became a blank—was, in the last stages of his malady, fill’d, like a cabalistick book, with delusions, and crowded with the wildest flights of morbid fancy ;—it was always active,—always on the stretch ;—and, so far from his exhibiting that moping fatuity which obscured the last sad and silent days of Swift, it might have been said of him— “ how pregnant sometimes his replies are !—a happiness which reason and sanity would not so prosperously be deliver’d of.”

It must be admitted that, on his coming to Town, after his partial recovery from the severe illness at Margate, (of which I have more to say anon,) he was not so capable of directing his domestick affairs, and managing his dramatick business, as previously ;—he might even discover, to those who had opportunities of observing him closely, the marks of approaching distraction,—but not the advance of infantile imbecility :—he

also suffer'd under several fits of epilepsy ;—when the greatest alertness was exercised, by plunging him instantly into a hot slipper-bath, to prevent the immediate termination of his existence ;—but, whenever free from these attacks, he was busily occupied in preparing for his summer seasons in the Hay-Market Theatre, and in writing.

During this period, (from the beginning of 1786 to 1789,) he publish'd two or three volumes of Miscellanies, consisting partly of his old fugitive poetry and prose, and partly of new matter ;—he composed a pamphlet containing some “ Particulars of his Life,” to be edited, as a posthumous memoir, by his Executor, and which was, in due time, printed ;—he constructed, also, a slight Musical Entertainment, in one act, founded on one of Hogarth's prints*, and successfully produced it at his own theatre, only one month before his ultimate confinement,—when the Court of Chancery placed his person and estate under my care.—Did all this look like a gradual descent to drivelling ?—a term which, let me be permitted to acknowledge, I cannot quote, when applied to my father, without impatience and disgust.

* Call'd “*Ut Pictura Poesis*, or The Enraged Musician.”

I may be ask'd, however, what was his state of mind *after* I had the care of him :—that question I answer by recording a very extraordinary effort of his brain, while in such a situation.

He had often comparatively lucid intervals of days and weeks ;—during one of these he inquired of me the fate of my Play call'd “The Battle of Hexham,” which had been recently brought out, and was my first attempt at that mix'd kind of Drama ;—I gave him some account of it, when he said,—“George, I will show you how such a Piece ought to be written ;”—and, in about a week afterwards, he put into my hands a one act Drama which he had just finish'd, on a subject selected from the Arabian Nights' Entertainments ;—it was in perfectly regular and well-measured blank verse, ~~the~~ story was clearly told, and the conduct of the scenes altogether evinced the Stage-knowledge of a practised veteran ;—sometimes there were strange romantick thoughts, and rhapsodies, which betray'd an imagination influenced by the moon ; but they manifested anything rather than intellect involved in the darkness of idiotick night.

I was not aware, while he lived, that, previously to 1789, he had certain moments of secret despondency, arising from a consciousness that, however long he might linger, the blow which he had received from paralysis was the dismal har-binger of death ;—but, on looking over some of his papers, which came into my possession, I found a trait which convinced me of it :—

He had long been in the habit of purchasing those annual pocket-books with pages arranged for the insertion of short memoranda, and was very precise in making entries of his dinner engagements, and various casual occurrences ;—in his book for 1785, he had particularly noted the day of the month on which he was so suddenly stricken by disease,—and, under it there appear'd, in very large characters of his own writing,

“ *HÆRET LATERI LETHALIS ARUNDO :*”

his adoption of this half line from Virgil, presenting the picture of a wounded deer, still ranging the forest, with the deadly arrow sticking in its side, was too plainly allusive to himself to be mistaken ;—and too mournfully expressive of *his* feelings to fail of giving a shock to my own.

Return we now to Margate,—whence, in my excursive propensities, I have prematurely wander'd, and shaken the sands of Time's hour-glass backwards and forwards, into terrible confusion.

Jewell came back on the day after his departure, jaded by his journey, and from not having been in bed for two nights. Doctor Warren, he told me, could not, or would not, come to the assistance of his old friend;—but he had recommended a learned brother, who had accompanied him (Jewell) from London. 'This *Locum-tenens* of Warren was Doctor Harvey; the Registrar, I believe, at that time, of the College of Physicians; a gentleman of repute in his profession, and of formality in his appearance:—he seem'd to cherish those outward personal dignities, which had, even then, almost disappear'd, of the old-school doctors; and wore a grave suit, (in which he might have gone to Court, instead of coming to Margate,) with his hair in a bag. Jewell and he form'd a grotesque pair of travelling companions;—the Treasurer's *nankeens*, and blue silk stockings, which I have already celebrated in my journey to Scotland,

were a fine contrast to the Registrar's full-dress'd *sad-colour'd** clothes, his stand-up collar, his three cut steel buttons on the cuffs of his coat, and his three more, on the flaps of each pocket, over his rump.

When Doctor Harvey had made his appearance, Doctor R. retreated in dudgeon.—I do not mean to hold up this last gentleman as the most luminous among the descendants of *Æsculapius*, but I doubt whether he was fairly treated; for much obloquy was cast upon him by my father, who talk'd loudly of his deficiencies in professional skill;—such evidence, however, was not only *ex parte*, but questionable on the score of *mens sana* in the witness; and, therefore, should not have been admitted, to the prejudice of a physician's reputation:

Be this as it may, whatever had been the merits or errors of Doctor R.'s system, Doctor Harvey proceeded upon opposite principles, which were more successful:—insomuch that,

* *Sad*, in olden times, was synonymous with dark:—"I met him accidentally in London in sad-colour'd clothes."

after a stay of two or three days, finding he had removed all *danger*, he return'd to town ; repeating his visits to Margate (costly visits for the sick !) once a week, for the space of a month, —and then pronounced the patient equal to a removal to London, and to the resumption of his worldly avocations.

In the last fortnight of my father's convalescence at Margate, "the clouds that lower'd upon our house" were not exactly "in the deep bosom of the Ocean buried,"—although the Ocean was so near ;—but all apprehensions, for the time, being dissipated, I resumed my cheerfulness, took my morning rides to Ramsgate, Broadstairs, &c.,—went to the Libraries, and the Assembly-Room, and even began to crack my juvenile and ill-judged jokes on the solemn Doctor Harvey ;—jokes which were very ill taken, if taken at all.

It is odd that I should have known two Harveys whose callings, though so very different, caused both one and the other to be the daily and hourly witnesses of scenes which smelt of mortality :—the first being the learned Leech

above-mention'd ;—the second, the Landlord of the Black Dog, at Bedfont, (commonly call'd by corruption Belfound,) famed for his *Fish-Sauce*, and his knowledge and practice of Cookery.—I am uncertain whether he be still alive ; but his well-known, and well-frequented, Inn continues, I suppose, to overlook the Churchyard, which is remarkable for a couple of yews, clipp'd into likenesses, by no means flattering, of the beauteous birds of Juno.—I once scrawl'd some lines at this Inn, which I give from memory.

LINES WRITTEN AT THE INN, AT BEDFONT,
IN THE YEAR 1802.

HARVEY—whose Inn commands a view
Of Bedfont's Church, and Churchyard, too,—
Where Yew Trees, into Peacocks shorn,
In vegetable torture mourn,—
Is liable, no doubt, to glooms,
From "Meditations on the Tombs:"
But, while he meditates, he cooks,
Thus both to Quick and Dead he looks ;

Turning his mind to nothing, save
Thoughts on Man's Gravy, and his Grave.
Long may he keep from Church-yard holes
Our Bodies, with his Sauce for *Soles* !
Long may he hinder Death from beckoning
His Guests to settle their Last Reckoning !

If my attempts at pleasantry were unacceptable, or incomprehensible, to the Doctor, they were better understood, but much worse received, by the Apothecary ;—I beg pardon,—I should have put Surgeon before Apothecary, and Accoucheur after it,—for so did this personage designate himself.—He was a constant resident at Margate, and kept one of those show-shops for chymicals and galenicals which you pass, at night, in peril of being blinded by the glare of cochineal, and other dyes, from huge globular glass-bottles, stuck up in the windows ;—while those in the dark, who espy you at a distance, take you for a red man, or a green, or a blue, or an orange-tawny.—His name was *Silver*,—and, when things began to go well, he dropt in only twice in the twenty four hours, to inquire—“ how are we to day ? ” and “ how do we feel ourselves this

evening?"—previously to this, he had been in daily attendance for hours together.

I had but one solitary jest to shoot off against this Knight of the Pestle ;—but, from its repetition, and its absurdity, it excited great irritation in the party at whom it was levell'd :—It consisted simply in applying to *Mr. Silver* the old proverb, which states that “ all is not *Gold* that glitters,”—and, in pronouncing it according to the orthography of former days ;—of which we have innumerable instances in the old Authors ;—particularly in Shakspeare, who introduces this very adage in his Merchant of Venice, where the Prince of Morocco reads a scroll contain'd in one of Portia's caskets, beginning with

“ All that Glisters is not gold.”

Wherever I met Mr. Silver,—whether I met him in my father's chamber,—or popp'd upon him at the turning of a corner in Margate, which happen'd at least ten times a day,—I was always sure to salute him with,—“ *Mr. Silver*,—all is not *gold*” &c. &c., and he was as sure to answer, in great wrath,—“ Sir, you have told me that before.” He must have hated me in his heart ;—had I “ needed poison,” he would have been not

only “the caitiff wretch to sell it me,” but to give it me for nothing.—Between my extreme nonsense, and his being in a passion at it, it may be difficult to say which was the greatest fool of the two.

Even Jewell, who remain’d with us, grew facetious, and hazarded a fling or two at the Margate Galen ;—but Monsieur l’Apothicaire beat him out of the field, at raillery ;—an easy victory, though the Conqueror always celebrated it by a Triumph.—Jewell’s great delight, while here, was a morning dip in the sea ;—he preferr’d it at this place particularly, because, he said, “the machines had got a *yawning* ;”—by which he meant those tilts thrown out at the end of the vehicle, to screen the bather from view, and protect him from the weather ;—commonly call’d an *awning*.

Among my father’s friends who were then at Margate,—and who first made congratulatory visits to him, on the improving state of his health,—were *Messrs. Bearcroft* and *George Keate*.

The first of these,—Bearcroft,—had attain’d celebrity at the Bar, and was, at that time, of 1

know not what rank in his profession:—I have no documents on my table to ascertain the honours in jurisprudence to which he arrived; and I humbly submit, that it is not incumbent upon me to hunt after them.—I am mistaken, however, (upon a point which has nothing to do with these honours,) if it were not Bearcroft who fix'd a lasting nick-name upon a now veteran Member of Parliament;—which said veteran, in his early days, got up in the House of Commons, and modestly call'd himself a *CHICKEN of the Law*;—this expression would have been forgotten, after a transient laugh, if, when this tender piece of poultry sat down, the bold Bearcroft had not arisen, and boasted himself to be a tough *OLD COCK of the Law*.

I was at Westminster School, by the by, with the Chicken; though, as he is my senior, we were not in the *Shell** together:—both our titles will go with us to the grave:—old as we are, he is still unwillingly the Chicken, and I, by my own choice, George Colman *the Younger*.

The reason for my taking this designation of

* This is a *Form* so call'd, between the *Fifth* and *Sixth*.

apparently eternal juvenility, I have given in an Advertisement prefix'd to my Play call'd "The Iron Chest;" but, as this must be unknown to one in a million of the present day, I think it a good opportunity to make a reprint of it here :

"I, now, leave the reader to the perusal of my Play—and, lest my Father's memory may be injured by mistakes ; and, in the confusion of after times, the *Translator of Terence*, and the *Author of The Jealous Wife*, should be supposed guilty of *The Iron Chest*,—I shall, were I to reach the patriarchal longevity of Methusalah, continue (in all my dramattick publications) to subscribe myself

George Colman, THE YOUNGER."

And why not continue to do so in *other* publications ?—since my father as well as I (or rather greatly *better* than I) has written on several subjects which are not dramattick.—When I first assumed this appellation, the Newspaper Wittings strove to saddle me with the title of the *Piccadilly Pliny*,—because I then lived in Picca-

dilly, and there had been an Elder Pliny, and a Younger ;—exquisite wags !—but, whatever my age, the devil must be in it if I were not born after my father.

MR. GEORGE KEATE, whom I have mention'd after Mr. Bearcroft, was a worthy gentleman of independent fortune ;—I refer my readers to the general account given of him in the *Biographia Dramatica* ; wherein they will find that he was of good connexions, and descended from a good family,—that he “ *obliged* the world with several poems of *distinguish'd* elegance and reputation ; that he was the author of the *Monument of Arcadia*, a pastoral Dramatick Poem ; of a Tragedy from the *Semiramis* of Voltaire ; [never acted, being superseded by Ayscough's contemptible version of the same Piece,]—that a list of his prose and poetical works were publish'd in the *Gentleman's Magazine**,—and that his Poems were publish'd with a *Portrait*.”—

* I have mention'd, in a previous Chapter, that the Occasional Prelude to *The Beggars' Opera Reversed* was attributed to Mr. Keate. He also publish'd, between editing and writing, an interesting account of the Pellew Islands, and of Prince Lee Boo, who was brought thence into this Country, where he died.

How he came to have courage to sit for his portrait I should not understand, if I had not, in the present work, shown the same intrepidity* ;—for his countenance was more grotesquely ugly than the generality of human faces. For some time, I wonder'd what freak of Nature could have made it so, till I heard him tell my father that nature's frolick had been materially seconded by accident.—He had been at a Play, in a side-box of one of the London Theatres, when there was a cry of “ Fire !” “ I was excessively frighten'd,” said Mr. Keate ;—“ so much so, indeed, that when I had got home, and, thanks to Providence, had escaped,—though the alarm was a false one,—I found that my *eyebrows and eyelashes had dropt off*, through apprehension ;—and they have never,—as you may perceive, sir,—grown again.”

I have heard much of the effects of fear,—such as the hair standing on end,—and even turning grey on the sudden,—but of its causing eyebrows and eyelashes instantly to vanish, in the side-box of a theatre, (unless they were false ones, and

* My Booksellers expected a Portrait,—and the engraving prefix'd to these volumes is from a Sketch kindly given to me by John Jackson, Esq. R. A.

shaken off, in a squeeze to get out,) I never before, or since, met with an example.

The gravity with which Mr. Keate told this story, and the ruefulness of his bald wooden visage, gave me much pain, from the difficulty of suppressing a vulgar and uproarious horse-laugh.

Having finish'd his history, he began upon a subject much more doleful, by pulling from his pocket a Manuscript Play, of his own writing, and asking my father (oh, horror !) to let him read it to him :—the proposition was waived ;—but the Author express'd his doubts whether he should announce his work as a production of Pleasantry or Woe,—for it partook of both :—

There are many instances of the difficulty in determining such a question ;—but I have discover'd from a scrap, raked out from my father's papers, how it was once resolved.

A certain Lord B—of former times—had finish'd a Play ;—and, as it was upon a mix'd story, he consulted his father, who was Primate of Ireland, whether he should call it a Tragedy or a Comedy ;—“*Murra, Murra,*” said the Primate, “call it a *Tragedy*, for it is a *dismal Piece* !”

In this tragedy there were the following lines,—

“ And so, without any more ifs or ands,
He jump'd from off the cliffs upon the sands;—”

which the Author generously express'd (in a note)
his willingness to alter, if required, into—

“ And so, without any more ands or ifs,
He jump'd from off the sands upon the cliffs.”

In this work was, also, extant—

“ So when a Huntsman goeth out to hawk,
He finds two filberts growing on one stalk ;
He cracks the one, and finding it unsound,
Concludes the other so, though lying on the ground ;
So Amaryllis, born of mother chaste,
She to be pure must hold her honour fast.”

N. B.—In the same Play, the King having
order'd a Slave's ears to be cut off, the Slave
roars, and the Attendant tells the King that the
sufferer is

“ In great grief and pain ;”—

upon which the King—touch'd with compassion—
cries out,

“ Give him, oh ! give him both his ears again.”

The time was now ripe for bringing my father
to London ;—he was convey'd thither without
fatigue, by breaking the journey into easy divi-
sions ;—he slept, on the first night, at Sitting-

bourne ; on the next, at Dartford ; and, on the third day, he reach'd his house in Soho Square ;—but sadly alter'd from the time of his leaving it,—in the short space of two months :—he came home wrapp'd in flannels,—the limbs of half his body lifeless,—and the deadly arrow, to which he had so gloomily alluded, rankling in his side !

His spirit, however, struggled against disease, and he insisted upon pursuing his wonted avocations.—No one about him could, then, control his will ;—but, in the business of his theatre, in which he continued to exert himself beyond his strength, I endeavour'd, as far as I could, and with due respect, to assist him, without appearing to do so,—for he was extremely jealous of the least interference in his concerns.

These circumstances, if any doubts were left, as to my future studies, completely turn'd them into a theatrical channel ; but so far from its narrowing the limits of the little incidents in my mortal career, the plot thenceforward thicken'd.—Writing continually for the mimick Stage not only brought me into a variety of transactions connected with the Drama, but tended greatly to enlarge the circle of my general acquaintance, and

to increase my knowledge of Scenes, and Characters, upon the Stage of Real Life.—Of different ranks, I have had opportunities of seeing much, from high to low,—even from a Court to a Cottage,—including many intermediate degrees in the Scale of Society.—Further materials, therefore, are not wanting to me for a continuance of my *autobiography*,—materials which may promise, perhaps, to be more acceptable to modern readers than these which I here put forth ;—since (from my progressive mingling with the world) they will approach nearer to the present times :—

If, then, the specimens of scribbling which I now publish should not prove altogether unenterprising to the million, I propose to follow them up, in due time, with FURTHER RECORDS.

ERRATUM.

VOL. II. p. 248, line 4, for 1784 read 1788.

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